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**THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
OF MAHATMA GANDHI**

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With a Foreword
by
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**TO
THE MEMORY OF MY BROTHER**

FOREWORD

BY

SIR S. RADHAKRISHNAN

Dr. Gopi Nath Dhawan, M.A., Ph.D., has written a very valuable book on *the Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi*. He relates the teaching of Gandhi to the ancient Indian tradition and brings out its kinship with the teachings of other religions. He gives us a detailed and comprehensive exposition of the technique of Satyagraha along with its metaphysical foundations and practical applications. At a time when we are struggling to build a world of peace and brotherhood, the teaching of the life and work of Mahatma Gandhi, which are the greatest contribution of our age to these ideals, must be found extremely useful by all workers in the cause of humanity.

S. RADHAKRISHNAN

BENARES HINDU UNIVERSITY

2nd October, 1946

PREFACE

This book is an attempt to study Mahatma Gandhi's Political Philosophy including his technique of resisting injustice and abuse of power and of effecting social change. The study is in the context of his philosophy of life. The history of the movements of non-violent resistance led by Gandhiji and others is outside the scope of this book. I have also omitted any detailed account of the historical setting in which Gandhiji developed his theory. This has been necessary because of considerations of space, but this omission has, I trust, the saving grace of letting Gandhiji's Political Philosophy stand out in relief. My desire not to overburden the treatment with historical details has been also due to the conviction that the circumstances of the time of the birth and growth of the theory are not necessarily the test of its validity.

I wrote the book as a thesis for the Ph.D. degree during 1939-41 and am grateful to the authorities of the Lucknow University for permitting me to publish it. In revising it for publication I have made use of Gandhiji's writings and other relevant literature published after 1941. For encouragement and valuable suggestions I am deeply indebted to Sir S. Radhakrishnan, Dr V. S. Ram, Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, Lucknow University, and Dr E. Asirvatham, Head of the Department of Politics and Public Administration, Madras University. I am grateful to Mr V. K. N. Menon, Reader in Political Science, and Mr D. P. Mukerji, Reader in Economics and Sociology, of the Lucknow University. Both of them gave me generously of their time, read the MSS. with minute care and suggested many valuable clarifications of thought and expression. I am obliged to Mr P. G. Narayana, formerly Head of the Department of English in the Lakshmi College, for his keen interest in the book and for many improvements which he suggested. I also wish to express my gratitude to Syt. K. M.

Munshi for very kindly making arrangements for the publication of the book. For help given through books and literature I am thankful to Dr M. Ruthnaswamy, Prof. N. K. Chaddha of the Bareilly college and Syt. Radha Krishna Agarwal, M.L.A. There are also many others, friends and colleagues as well as students of mine, to whom I am indebted for help during the preparation and printing of the book.

I may be permitted to add that the major part of the book had been printed before the war came to an end ; hence the expressions ' the present war ' and ' the last war ' which occur at many places in the book and which are now inappropriate. There is also a reference on p. 166 to two of the Congress institutions not functioning. But the ban imposed on them by the Government has now been removed.

G. N. DHAWAN.

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INTRODUCTION

THIRTY-SIX years ago, in a booklet entitled *Hind Swaraj*, Mahatma Gandhi characterized modern civilization as “a disease” and “a nine days’ wonder,” for it “takes note neither of morality nor of religion.”¹ Moral purity and spiritual stamina, he held, are of incomparably greater survival value to civilizations than physical might and material prosperity. But the warning was mistaken for the mystic effusion of an oriental saint strayed into politics and went unheeded. Today, however, Europe lies maimed and mutilated amidst its own carnage and devastation and along with the present world war modern civilization seems to be moving to a terrible climax.

The evils associated with modern civilization touch practically every aspect of life. Due to the progress of science and technology the last hundred years have given man greater mastery over nature by means of machines than the rest of history. But this achievement, far from making man happier or wiser, has been his greatest misfortune. The bewildering complexity of life resulting from advances in “machine mastery” has made self-control more and more difficult. Thus material progress has spelt moral ruin.

This moral lag expresses itself in man’s inordinate love of wealth and power. The profit-motive has blinded him to the ideal of service and lies at the root of capitalism with all its attendant evils. Love of power has been one of the most important causes of war and its increasing destructiveness.

Obviously democracy cannot go hand in hand with capitalism and war preparations. The latter require a high degree of centralised control bordering on totalitarianism and it is, indeed, no wonder that most of the ‘civilized’ States are today tamely submitting to the tyranny of dictators of one kind or another. Nationalisation of conscience and regimen-

1. *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 20-22 & 92.

tation of intellect are fast becoming ordinary features of life in the modern State.¹ This blind worship of wealth and violence cannot go on indefinitely without the human race relapsing into savagery.

But "Civilization", Gandhiji holds, "is not an incurable disease,"² though it requires a drastic, revolutionary remedy. This remedy is, according to him, the cultivation of non-violence in all spheres of life.

For centuries war and violence have been tried as a means of achieving peace and prosperity. Today they threaten the very existence of the human race, and the conviction has been growing among the saner sections of mankind that non-violence is the only way of averting the catastrophe.

Gandhiji's philosophy of satyagraha deserves to be studied because it embodies the life-long researches of the greatest exponent of non-violence. His philosophy is also important because it is the most original contribution of India to political thought and political practice. Moreover, it forms the philosophical background of the present-day nationalist movement in India where it has moved the masses and won tremendous popularity.

The popularity of the philosophy of satyagraha is also partly due to Gandhiji's unique personality. Emerson classified great men into three groups—the Knower, the Doer and the Sayer. Gandhiji combines in himself all these three aspects of greatness. In the line of saints and prophets, he has often been ranked with Buddha and Christ. To millions of people in India and outside he is the highest embodiment of India's genius and of her eternal will to non-violence. He is one of the greatest revolutionary leaders of the world who aim at organising the people, capturing political power and revolutionizing the present social order. But his

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1. For incidents illustrating how freedom of the press is becoming illusory in a country like England see the chapter on Propaganda in *Where Stands Democracy?* by Laski and others, and *The Press* (Penguin Series) by W. Stead, specially the Post-script. Indian examples are too well-known.
 2. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 22.

philosophy is concerned with deeper things, with the eternal problems of man's ultimate goal and the way he should live in all spheres of life in order to advance towards this goal.

The philosophy of satyagraha is essentially practical. It does not resemble those systematic fancies spun out by academic theorists which are often too neat and too logical to be true to life. Gandhiji is a *karmayogin*, a practical idealist, and his philosophy has grown out of his own experience, his experiments with truth and non-violence. He teaches only what he has himself practised and what he considers to be practicable for everybody making the necessary effort. Though a man of religion, he makes no false distinction between the religious and the mundane, the spiritual and the temporal. To him religion is meaningless unless it provides a moral basis to all activities of life. He insists that an ideal must prove itself here and now and the highest ethics must also be the highest expediency.

Being practical, the philosophy of satyagraha concerns itself primarily with the means. It does not ignore the end, but as the end grows out of the means, the progressive use of the non-violent way is everything to the satyagrahi.

To Gandhiji the end is "the greatest good of all." He is a philosophical anarchist because he believes that this end can be realised only in the classless and Stateless democracy of autonomous village communities based on non-violence instead of coercion, on service instead of exploitation, on renunciation instead of acquisitiveness and on the largest measure of local and individual initiative instead of centralization. Non-violent nationalism will be co-operative and constructive and will be an integral part of universal humanity instead of being exclusive, competitive and militant ; and conflicts will be resolved not on the physical plane of brute force but on the spiritual plane of love. Gandhiji is, however, not a visionary ; and as the non-violent society is yet an ideal, remote and uncertain, his philosophy is mainly concerned with the individual who will live and die for the ideal and with the non-violent way that will lead him to it. He does not

bother about the details of the distant goal. He has discovered the right path, and one clear step, he believes, should lead to another till in the fulness of time the efforts grow into achievement. To the extent, however, that the method has developed, the broad outlines of the non-violent society of Gandhiji's conception are discernible.

The non-violent technique that he has evolved during half a century of his public life seems to be the only hope and the most sensible strategy of the poor, the 'backward' and the down-trodden. For the first time in the history of the world he has shown how even unarmed nations can make war—of course, non-violent war—to win freedom. He has thus given to the world what has been a desideratum for long, "a moral equivalent of war."

In Gandhiji's philosophy stress is always laid on the individual as the starting point of social regeneration. To him the problem of the group is essentially the problem of the individual. The reason for this emphasis is that man is above all the soul, and the progress of society depends on the soul-force of the average individual. Unlike Marxists and Fascists who work from the outside and work to the inner, Gandhiji starts from the soul within and works his way out to the environment. But though in his plan of social reconstruction he attaches great importance to the individual with whom lies the first step, he also makes the institutional approach. Thus satyagraha works from the individual to the social order and also from the social order back to the individual.

But Gandhiji does not take a partial view of man. He does not neglect the demands of man's lower nature. His well-known letter to Tagore, entitled "The Great Sentinel,"¹ is an irrefutable vindication of the minimum legitimate physical needs of man. But man is not a mere physical being conditioned by stimuli. The real being in man, the central truth in him, is the spirit. The spirit is one in all, and to realise this great truth "one has to lose oneself in the continuous

1. *Speeches*, pp. 607-613.

and continuing service of all life.”¹ Thus the individual must live for social service and live more and more by self-direction than by mere habit.

Another feature of his philosophy—and this is a source of diffidence to the student—is that it is still evolving. In his own words, “Non-violence in politics is a new weapon in the process of evolution.”² “I am myself daily growing in the knowledge of satyagraha. I have no text-book to consult in time of need, . . . Satyagraha as conceived by me is a science in the making.”³ Gandhiji insists that loyalty to truth rules out fixed modes of thought and action, rigidity of attitude or any claim to finality. Truth as known to man is relative. Its seeker must be willing to learn from facts and to evolve and mould his principles according to changing circumstances and situations.

His philosophy may, no doubt, continue to grow so long as he is alive and it may be possible to evaluate it properly only long after it has become history. But we cannot, on that account, postpone the scientific study of this sensible remedy for the ills that afflict the modern world. Besides, half a century of his public life devoted to experiments with truth and non-violence has already become a part of history and he himself provides ample material for a study of their results.

Further, even though his philosophy is a living and evolving phenomenon, we can definitely discern its prominent contours. Now its evolution is more in the nature of filling in of the details or making slight changes in the superstructure rather than any alterations in the layout of its foundations. Thus, referring to his book, *Hind Swaraj*, written in 1908, he says, “But after a stormy thirty years through which I have since passed I have seen nothing to make me alter the views expounded in it.”⁴

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1. *Contemporary Indian Philosophy* edited by Sir S. Radhakrishnan and J. H. Muirhead, Gandhiji's article.
 2. *H.* Oct. 23, 1937, p. 308.
 3. *H.* Sept. 24, 1938, p. 266.
 4. *Aryan Path*, Sept. 1938.

CHAPTER I

FORERUNNERS

NON-VIOLENCE has been preached and practised in practically every country and by people in every stage of culture. Many leaders of thought and founders of great religions of the world have taught that violence cannot be overcome by violence and evil cannot be overcome by evil.

In no other country of the world has the tradition of non-violence been so deep-rooted and continuous as in India. Non-violence is rightly considered to be India's greatest contribution to world-thought. All the important Indian religions preach non-violence as the greatest duty. Indians have believed from early times in the doctrine of spiritual immanence expressed in the well-known aphorisms *Soham* (I am He) and *Tat Tvamasi* (Thou art That). The conviction that all life is one has led to the extension of non-violence even to subhuman creation.

Varnashramadharma,¹ the social organisation of the Hindus, the earliest reference to which occurs in the famous *Purusha Sukta* of the *Rig Veda*, aimed at training people in this supreme virtue. Its goal was to make all men, even the sudras, brahmins. A brahmin filled with peaceful joy, born of communion with the Universal Soul, represented the highest of which human nature is capable and was expected to refrain spontaneously from resisting evil by force. The kshatriya was no doubt permitted, as a concession to his weakness, to employ force in order to resist aggression. But it was recognised that the law of love practised by the brahmin is higher than the law of brute force employed by the kshatriya. *Varnashramadharma* also laid down that the kshatriya should fight in a spirit of brotherliness, without hate and out of a

1. For the relation between non-violence and *varnashramadharma* we depend on the works of Sir S. Radhakrishnan. See his *Heart of Hindustan*, pp. 22-4 and 44-5 and *The Hindu View of Life*, pp. 117 foll.

sense of duty and not in a vindictive mood. The kshatriya would, if he acted in this spirit of humanity, rise spiritually and rely less and less on brute force until he became a brahmin incapable of injuring any living being. In the words of Sir S. Radhakrishnan, "Though violent resistance is allowed, the end is to transcend it." At any rate *varnashramadharma* restricted fighting to only a small section of the entire population, i.e., the kshatriyas.

Hindu ethics since the time of *Upanishadas* has always laid stress on the virtue of *ahimsa*, or non-injury to all living beings, human or otherwise. According to Rhys Davids *ahimsa* is expressly mentioned for the first time in the *Chhandogya Upanishad* (III, 17) "where five ethical qualities, one being *ahimsa*, are said to be equivalent to a part of sacrifice of which the whole life of man is made an epitome."¹

Patanjali, whose *Yogasutra* Gandhiji studied in 1903 at Johannesburg, included *ahimsa* in his *panchyamas*, i.e., the five cardinal disciplines which have since had the pride of place in the Hindu technique of spiritual advancement. As we will discuss later (chapters III and IV), Gandhiji has elaborated these *yamas* and made them an integral part of the discipline of the satyagrahi. Patanjali lays down that *ahimsa* is not merely a negative doctrine in the sense of avoidance of violence. It also involves goodwill towards all creatures.²

The tradition of *ahimsa* was further developed in the epics of India. The *Ramayana*³ and the *Mahabharata*, the guides

1. T. W. Rhys Davids in the article on *Ahimsa* in *The Encyclopaedia of Ethics and Religion*. The relevant text of the *Chhandogya* is

अथ यत्तपो दानमार्जवमहिंसा सत्यवचनमिति ता अस्य दक्षिणाः ।

2. S. K. Maitra, *Ethics of the Hindus*, pp. 220-1.

Patanjali's famous aphorism on *ahimsa* is : अहिंसा प्रतिष्ठायान्तस्सन्निधौ

वैरत्यागः । (As soon as *ahimsa* is perfected all enmity around ceases).

3. Gandhiji's first acquaintance with the *Ramayana* of Tulsidas dates back to his childhood when he was 13 years of age. He considers it to be "the greatest book in all devotional literature." *Experiments*, I, p. 83.

of millions in India, are apparently stories of wars. But the object of these poets, Valmiki and Vyas, is not the mere description of wars. Gandhiji is of opinion that the epics, though probably some of the figures they deal with are historical, are allegories which describe the eternal duel that goes on within man between the forces of light and darkness.¹ In the *Ramayana* the moral grandeur of the acts of peace eclipses the war. The *Mahabharata* seems to demonstrate the futility of war and violence. It gives an empty glory to the victors, for seven only were left alive out of the millions that engaged in the titanic conflict. It makes the blind king Dhritarashtra and the queen Gandhari listen to the agonizing details of the terrible carnage of their sons and nephews as it goes on from day to day. The *Mahabharata* also shows that in a violent war the contending parties are certain to stoop to meanness and trickery. Even the great Yudhishthira had to resort to untruth to save the battle.

The *Mahabharata* also directly advocates *ahimsa*. Indeed, by the time of the *Mahabharata* *ahimsa* had come to be regarded as the highest duty. Vyas extols *satya*, *ahimsa* and other non-violent values at several places in the *Mahabharata*. The wounded Bhishma thus exalted *ahimsa* in his discourse to Yudhishthira, “*Ahimsa* is the highest religion. It is again the highest penance. It is also the highest truth from which all duty proceeds.”² In the *Shanti parva* Kapila considers kindness, forgiveness, peacefulness, *ahimsa*, truth, straightforwardness, absence of pride, modesty, forbearance and tolerance as the ways to attain *Brahman*.³ In the *Vana parva* we read “The hard and the soft yield alike to the soft ; in fact there is

1. References to Gandhiji's views on *ahimsa* in the epics are : *H.* Oct. 30, 1936, p. 266 ; Sept. 5, 1936, p. 236 ; Nov. 11, 1939, p. 330 ; August 18, 1940, p. 250 ; and *Y. L.*, II, p. 937.

२ अहिंसा परमो धर्म अहिंसा परमं तपः ।

अहिंसा परमं सत्यं ततो धर्मं प्रवः

Anushasana-parva (Edited by P. P. S. Sastri), CIV, 25. For emphasis on *ahimsa* see also *Anusasanaparva*, CV, 23-45. Similarly for Truth see *Shantiparva* (P. P. S. Sastri), CLXXXVIII, 61-74.

३ आनृशस्यं क्षमा शान्तिर् अहिंसा सत्यमार्जवम् ।

अद्रोहो नातिमानश्च ह्रीस्तितिज्ञा शमस्तथा ।

पन्थानो ब्राह्मणस्त्वैत एतैः प्राप्नोति यत् परम् ॥

Shantiparva (Edited by P. P. S. Sastri), CCLV, 39-40.

nothing impossible for the soft, hence the soft is more powerful than the hard.”¹

In regard to the *Gita* there has been a controversy as to whether it advocates *ahimsa* or *himsa*. The *Gita* is the quintessence of the *Upanishadas* and is considered by many to be the brightest gem in Indian philosophical literature.

Of the books that have moulded Gandhiji the *Gita* easily comes the first. Gandhiji's first acquaintance with it was in England in 1889 when he studied, along with two English friends, Sir Edwin Arnold's translation. Since then he has studied all its important commentaries, and for long he has been reading the *Gita* daily. In his well-known address to Christian missionaries in Calcutta on July 28, 1925, he acknowledged his attachment to the *Gita* thus :

“... Though I admire much in Christianity . . . I find a solace in the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Upanishadas* that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount . . . when doubt haunts me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the *Bhagavad Gita*, and find a verse to comfort me ; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies, and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita*.”²

The *Gita*,³ like the *Mahabharata* of which it is the most valued part, is not a treatise on non-violence, nor was it written to condemn war. Similarly it does not advocate violence either. The theme of the *Gita* is self-realization and its means. The second and eighteenth chapters give us the central teaching of the *Gita*, the ideal of *anasaktiyoga* or

१ मृदुना दारुणं हन्ति मृदुना हन्त्यदारुणम् ।

नासाध्यम् मृदुना किञ्चित् तस्मात्तीक्ष्णतरस्मृदुः ॥

Vanaparva (Edited by P. P. S. Sastri), XXIV, 30.

2. *Y. I.*, II, p. 1078-79.

3. References to Gandhiji's views on *ahimsa* in the *Gita* are : the introduction to his *Anasakti Yoga* (Hindi) ; *Y. I.*, II, pp. 907, 927-40 ; *H. Jan.* 21, 1939, p. 430 ; and Oct. 3, 1936, p. 257.

nishkam karma (action without the desire for the result). The last nineteen verses of the second chapter, which, says Gandhiji, "contain for me all knowledge" and "are the key to the interpretation of the *Gita*,"¹ explain how the balanced state of mind can be achieved by killing all passions and by renouncing desires rather than objects. The *sthita-prajna*, the ideal man of the *Gita*, is humble and merciful, free from joy and sorrow, fear and hatred and unconcerned with good or bad results. He is essentially a non-violent man, for violence has for its basis the desire to enjoy the results of one's action. As Gandhiji once said to Dr Kagawa, "It is not possible to kill your brother after having killed all your passions."² Conversely, this supreme state of non-attachment cannot be fully achieved without the practice of non-violence.

No doubt Arjuna who had refused to fight was convinced of his mistake after the discourse and agreed to join battle. But Arjuna was no conscientious objector. His pacifism was born of a temporary infatuation, a disinclination to kill his own kith and kin due to false pity. He was not worried over the problem of killing as such. His hesitation was due to the persons whom he was intended to kill. This was cowardice and killing and being killed, Krishna taught, is far better than cowardice.

It may be argued that Krishna, inspite of his detachment, was not neutral in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. He was on the side of right and truth. Though he refrained from fighting, he was an expert in war. His advice and expert knowledge were availed of by the Pandavas, and it is wrong to suppose that his support was only moral. But the Krishna of the *Gita* is a liberated soul, who has attained perfect mental equilibrium and risen above violence and non-violence. Only such a person can kill for the good of all without the least attachment and is non-violent even while killing.³ For the ordinary mortal treading this solid earth

1. *Y. I.*, II, p. 935.

2. *H.* Jan. 14, 1939, p. 430.

3. *Gita*, XVIII, 17.

the practice of *ahimsa* seems essential for attaining the state of non-attachment.

In spite of the emphasis on *ahimsa* in the religious and philosophical literature, animal sacrifices continued to be practised in India. Jainism and Buddhism were revolts against the elaborate ritual, caste rigidity and sacrificial violence of the Brahminical faith.

Ahimsa is the leading tenet of the Jaina philosophy. Jainas believe that the entire world is literally packed with an infinite number of embodied souls, their bodies being either gross and visible or subtle and invisible. All the elements are animated with souls. The embodiment of the spirit in the material body is the cause of misery. So life means pain even to souls with invisible bodies. To become a *muktatma*, a soul liberated from the bonds of the body, the individual must complete the process of *nirjara*, i.e., get rid of *karmas*. For this there are three means (*triratnas*), right faith (*samyak jnan*), right knowledge (*samyak darshan*) and right conduct (*samyak charitrya*). Right conduct consists in five vows (*vratas*) of which non-killing (*ahimsa*) is the first, the other four being truthfulness, non-stealing, non-possession and celibacy. Monks have to observe them rigidly and laymen so far as they can.

Jainas lay excessive emphasis on *ahimsa*. To give some instances of their extreme scrupulousness, the Jaina ascetics do not drive away vermin from their clothes or bodies, carry a filter and a broom to save minute insects in the water they drink or on the ground where they sit. The world being filled with embodied souls experiencing pain, all activities involve violence. So Jainism insists that the follower of *ahimsa* should engage in the fewest possible activities. Jainism, thus, encourages asceticism for its own sake. With Jainas *ahimsa* became synonymous with refusal to take the life of even the smallest insect. This is, indeed, the extreme application of the negative aspect of a vital principle, and as such it has become, in the words of Mr Andrews, "a burden to humanity almost impossible to bear."¹ All the same Jainism

1. C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 132.

has been an important factor in sustaining and deepening the tradition of non-violence in India.

In no other province of India is the hold of Jainism on the life of the people greater than in Gujerat where Gandhiji was born and brought up. In his childhood his father, though a vaishnava, frequently associated with Jaina monks.¹ In spite of this early Jaina influence, Gandhiji, unlike Jainas, does not lay undue emphasis on the negative aspect of *ahimsa*.

Buddhism avoids the extreme view of *ahimsa* taken by Jainism.² Buddha's teaching, which, it has been said, begins with purity and ends with love, is distinguished by the supremacy of the ethical rather than the metaphysical element. His ethics is the practical application of the ethics of the *Upanishadas*.

The four cardinal truths of Buddhism (*chatussatyani*) are suffering (*dukkha*), its cause (*samudaya*), its cessation (*nirodha*) and the path leading to it (*marga*). The noble eight-fold path (*arya ashtangik marga*), the moral code of self-discipline, which has been called by Rhys Davids "the very essence of Buddhism," is essentially non-violent.³ *Ahimsa* again is the first among the ten precepts for the order (*sikha padani*) as well as among the five rules of conduct for laymen (*panchsilani*) which correspond to the first five of the precepts.

"Not by hate is hate destroyed, by love alone is hate destroyed," is a well-known saying of Buddha. He also

1. Experiments, I, pp. 56, 57 and 84.

2. It is interesting to note that eating flesh prepared and offered by others is not contrary to the Buddhist practice and Buddha's last meal is said to have included a dish of pork. Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism*, p. 79.

3. The noble eight-fold path consists of right views (free from superstition and delusion), right resolution (high and worthy of intelligent earnest men), right speech (kindly, open and truthful), right conduct (peaceful, honest and pure), right livelihood (not hurting any living being), right effort (self-training and self-control), right mindfulness (active and watchful state of mind) and right rapture (deep meditation on the realities of life). E. D. Soper, *Religions of Mankind*, p. 191.

said, "let a man overcome anger by love ; let him overcome evil by good ; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth. Thus will he become divine. Lead others, not by violence, but by righteousness and equity."

Addressing the monks he said, "If robbers and murderers should sever your joints and ribs with a saw, he who fell into anger thereat would not be fulfilling my commands."¹

The following verses of *Sutta Nipata* bring out clearly Buddha's ideal of *ahimsa* :—

"Even as a mother watches o'er her child,
Her only child, as long as life doth last,
So let us, for all creatures, great or small,
Develop such a boundless heart and mind,
Ay, let us practise love for all the world,
Above, below, around and everywhere,
Uncramped, free from ill-will and enmity."¹

In Buddha's teaching emphasis was mostly laid on non-violence in personal relations. He was against the literal application of the principle to the punishment of criminals and to war. The criminal should be punished, though the magistrate should harbour no hatred in his heart in punishing him. Similarly though he considered all war as lamentable, he did not teach that those who went to war in a righteous cause, after having exhausted all means to preserve the peace, were blameworthy. Though he taught a complete surrender of self, he did not teach a surrender of anything to those powers that are evil. To him the successful victor was one who moderated himself and, extinguishing all hatred in his heart, lifted his down-trodden adversary up and said to him, "Come now, and make peace, and let us be brothers."²

1. Quoted by Sir S. Radhakrishnan in his *East and West in Religion*, p. 110.
2. Paul Carus, *The Gospel of Buddha According to Old Records*, pp. 126-129.

Gautama's doctrine of *ahimsa*, i.e., returning love for hatred, avoiding all violence and cultivating compassion for all life, was no doubt one of the greatest steps forward taken by mankind.

Asoka occupies a unique place in the history of non-violence. To him alone belongs the distinction of making efforts to administer one of the biggest empires known to history on the principles of *ahimsa*. Intensely disgusted by the carnage and the cruelties of the Kalinga war, he gave up the royal hunt, the tours of pleasure and animal food and placed before the world the ideal of universal peace and brotherhood of all living creatures. In the words of Mr Wells, "He is the only military monarch on record who abandoned warfare after victory."¹

To his unsubdued borderers his message was, "The king desires that his unsubdued borderers, the peoples on his frontiers, should not be afraid of him but should trust him, and would receive from him not sorrow but happiness" (Kalinga Rock Edict II). He declared, "The chiefest conquest is the conquest of Right and not of might." (R. E. XIII). *Dharmavijaya*, won by love (*priti*) and expressed in social service and moral propaganda, was the positive aspect of his non-violent foreign policy which was based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity of all States, big and small.

Inside the empire his government vigorously devoted itself to social service among the masses. It also made arrangements for the moral instruction of his people in those cardinal principles of morality which are acceptable to every creed. Asoka has on this account been called humanity's first teacher of Universal Religion.² He had his principles of policy and morality inscribed on rocks and pillars and *ahimsa* forms the subject of the first, second and fourth of his Rock Edicts.

1. H. G. Wells, *The Outline of History* (1932), p. 400.

2. R. K. Mukerjee, *The Greatness of Asoka's Conquest* in *Prabuddha Bharat*, Dec. 1939, p. 585. See also his *Asoka*, p. 76.

But Asoka did retain the army and his moral principles were enforced among the people by the usual methods of punishment and coercion.

Later religious sects and religious teachers in India, especially the devotional saints who preached the *bhakti-marga*, continued to extol compassion, truth, charity, humility and other gentle virtues. So the tradition of *ahimsa* persisted down the centuries.¹ No distinctive contribution was, however, made to the evolution of the ideal after Asoka. Moreover, in the hands of the teachers of the cult of devotion, who drew a distinction between the life of the world and self-realization, non-violence came to be looked upon as inapplicable to secular matters.

All through this long period the people of India have been familiar with certain non-violent methods of resisting evil. *Dharna* (sitting down at the door of the oppressor with the resolve to die unless the wrong is redressed), *prayopaveshana* (fasting unto death), *ajñabhanga* (civil disobedience), *deshatyaga* (giving up the country) are instances. Before Gandhiji's entry into Indian politics these non-violent methods had been occasionally resorted to by individuals and, in rare instances, even by small groups. Bishop Heber describes non-co-operation by three lakhs of the people of Benares against the British Government long before Gandhiji's time.² Similarly in 1830 the entire population of Mysore practised non-co-operation against the tyranny of the ruler.³ Gandhiji tells us in his autobiography how his father, the Dewan of Rajkot, practised passive resistance successfully. An Assistant Political Agent spoke insultingly of the Thakore of Rajkot. His father protested. The Agent was angry and asked him to apologize and on refusal had him arrested and

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1. It may be incidentally mentioned that a hymn (entitled '*Vaishnavajan to tene kahiye*', i.e., he is the true vaishnava) of one of the teachers of this school, the poet saint Narsing Mehta (15th Century), is a special favourite of Gandhiji.
 2. The Rev. J. J. Doke refers to this instance in his *M. K. Gandhi, An Indian Patriot* (Natesan), p. 87.
 3. Bart de Light refers to this instance in Ch. VII of his *Conquest of Violence*.

detained for some hours. The town meanwhile grew excited. In the end the Agent ordered him to be released.¹

Non-violence is, however, not the peculiarity of any one race, creed or country. Being the expression of love, it is a universal virtue. Before dealing with the contribution of other countries and peoples we may briefly study the place of non-violence in Islam.

Unfortunately Islam has become associated in the common mind with violence and coercion. But the Prophet's was essentially a message of kindness and consideration, peace and love, love not only for human beings but also for sub-human creation. The *Koran* prefers non-violence to violence. The very word '*Islam*' means 'peace,' 'safety,' 'salvation.' The common Muslim salutation '*As-salamalaikum*' means 'peace be on you.'

In his personal life the Prophet was extremely gentle, humane and 'more modest than a virgin behind her curtain.' To his inferiors he was most indulgent, and scarcely ever rebuked his servant Anas. He loved all children and never cursed.²

He enjoined upon his followers to treat well women and slaves, two of the suppressed classes in Arabia at that time. He also insisted on the rights of animals and considered wanton destruction of life reprehensible. He said, "There is no beast on earth nor bird which flieth with its wings, but same is a people like unto you (mankind). Unto the Lord shall they return."³ The Prophet forbade the employment of living birds as targets for marksmen and remonstrated with those who ill-treated animals.

No doubt the *Koran* permits defensive war and war against the wrongdoer.⁴ The Prophet himself fought, but his were defensive wars, and he forgave his defeated enemies. Besides,

1. *Experiments*, I, p. 17 ; J. J. Doke, cited above, p. 16.

2. P. D. L. Johnstone, *Muhammad and His Power*, p. 149.

3. *Koran*, VI, 38.

4. *Ibid.*, XXII, 39 and II, 190-193.

there are passages in the *Koran* which show that he considered non-violence a better method of conquering evil than violence. He said, "Turn aside evil with that which is better."¹

He did not permit forcible conversion. He said, "Let there be no compulsion in religion ; the right way is in itself distinct from the wrong."² "But if thy Lord had pleased, verily all who are in the world would have believed together. Wilt thou then compel men to become believers ? No soul can believe but by the permission of God."³ The only method he advocated was preaching.⁴ The Prophet also taught the principle of religious toleration⁵ and the ideal of the brotherhood of all humanity irrespective of the differences of race, sect, colour, etc.

China, too, has had a long tradition of non-violence. For thousands of years the strike has been a well-known weapon, and disarmament proposals can be traced as far back as B.C. 546.⁶ The three Chinese religions, Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are pacific.

Confucious (about 551-478 B.C.) avoids the mistake, made by European thinkers, of admiring military heroism and martyrdom. To him an integrated, harmonious life is preferable to mere courageous death. The golden rule of Confucious, the basis of all relations, was the principle of reciprocity, i.e., men should not do to others as they do not want done to themselves.⁷

Confucious was, however, not opposed to group violence, for he considered a military equipment as the third requisite of government.⁸ He also repudiated Lao Tse's principle of returning good for evil and proposed to repay injury with

1. *Ibid.*, XXIII, 98 ; see also V, 127 ; XVII, 127 ; and XXIII, 196,

2. *Ibid.*, II, 256.

3. *Ibid.*, X, 99, 100.

4. *Ibid.*, III, 19.

5. *Ibid.*, VI, 108 ; XVI, 38 ; XXV, 22 ; XIII, 8 ; XXII, 41 etc.

6. A. C. F. Beales, *The History of Peace*, p. 16.

7. E. D. Soper, *Religions of Mankind*, p. 226.

8. C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 14.

justice.¹ Thus though he forbade revenge in personal relations, he did not preach the principle of overcoming evil by love.

Lao Tse, a contemporary of Confucious, who has been called "anarchist, evolutionist, pacifist and moral philosopher," and whose teachings later developed into modern Taoism, marks an advance on Confucious. He laid emphasis on the positive aspect of non-violence in personal reaction to injuries, i.e., on conquering evil by love. *Tao* means the way and, according to Lao Tse, the highest duty of man consists in learning and imitating the *Tao*, the eternal cosmic principle, the principle of non-assertion, the opposite of egotism and violence. Non-assertion means self-effacement and returning good for evil. For the first time in China Lao Tse clearly enunciated the doctrine of non-resistance, but his teaching was confined to personal relations, and he did not work out the social application of the doctrine.

In the recent past China has several times used the economic boycott against Britain and Japan. Though by no means a pacifist country today, she is free from the aggressive type of nationalism.

In ancient Greece Socrates was a satyagrahi who preferred the poison-bowl to giving up his pursuit of truth and resisting by non-violent means the superstitious beliefs of his people.

His disciple, Plato, asserted that "the creation of the world (i.e., the Cosmos) is the victory of persuasion over force." Violence, according to Plato, makes for Chaos; the "divine persuasion" makes for Cosmos.² In his Republic he puts the warrior class second to philosophers.

Among the stoics, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius clearly formulated the doctrine of non-resistance to evil in personal

1. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

2. Reference by Mr C. F. Andrews in his article on *The Divine Persuasion* in *Harijan*, August 13, 1938, and also in his address on *Ahimsa* published in *Review of Philosophy and Religion*, April, 1939.

affairs. The doctrine was, however, not applied to war or punishment of crime.¹

Early Rome (5th century B.C.) also provides us with a memorable example of non-violent non-co-operation. The exploited plebeians forced the patricians, by an organised non-violent exodus, to grant them political and economic rights.²

As for Judaism, the *Old Testament* abounds in passages that are looked upon as the heir-loom of the non-violent movement. Thus the *Pentateuch* says, "If thou meet thy enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again."³

"If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink."⁴

"Rejoice not when thine enemy faileth, and let not thine heart be glad when he stumbleth."⁵

"Hatred stirreth up strifes ; but love covereth all sins."⁶

The later scriptures of Judaism, for example, the *Mishna*, its commentary and the *Talmud*, kept up this tradition.

Professor W. E. Hocking writing about the early Jewish community observes, "In its case, a tenacious religious faith made possible a direction of public affairs uniquely informal and non-coercive. And while that faith cannot be reproduced, a moral equivalent is conceivable."⁷ Lord Acton writes, "The government of Israelites was a federation, held together by no political authority, but by the unity of race and faith and founded not on physical force, but on a voluntary covenant."⁸

1. C. M. Case, cited above, pp. 34-41.

2. B. de Ligt, *The Conquest of Violence*, pp. 106-7.

3. *Exodus*, XXIII, 4.

4. *Proverbs*, XXV, 21.

5. *Proverbs*, XXIV, 17.

6. *Proverbs*, X, 12.

7. W. E. Hocking, *Man and the State*, p. 93.

8. Lord Acton, *History of Freedom*, p. 4 (quoted by Prof. Hocking, cited above, p. 93).

In spite of the importance attached to non-violence in their scriptures, the Jews have not, during their long history of cruel persecution, shown much of an inclination to accept the doctrine of non-violent resistance.

Christianity is Jewish in origin and the doctrine of Jesus is nothing but the teaching of the *Old Testament* prophets, i.e., the law of love. Jesus makes the law revolutionary and transforming by raising it from the level of reciprocity to that of creative purpose.¹ The oft-repeated words of Jesus, "Ye have heard how it hath been said by them of old . . . but I say unto you," at once bring out the transforming effect of his teaching as well as its continuity with Judaism.

Jesus and his teachings are an important source of Gandhiji's philosophy of satyagraha. Gandhiji once told the Rev. J. J. Doke that it was the *New Testament*, especially the Sermon on the Mount, which really awakened him to the rightness and value of satyagraha. The *Gita* deepened the impression and Tolstoy's *The Kingdom of God is within You* gave it a permanent form. Later he was also influenced by Ruskin, Thoreau and the Passive Resistance Movement in England. Gandhiji calls Jesus the Prince of satyagrahis and says that he would not hesitate to call himself a Christian if he had to face only the Sermon on the Mount and his own interpretation of it.²

No doubt certain incidents and sayings of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels do not look like strict non-violence. The instances are the use of a whip to expel the money-changers from the temple (*John*, II, 15), the destruction of the Gadarene swine (*Luke*, VIII, 26-34), the injunction to buy a sword (*Luke*, XXII, 36), the parable of a strong man armed (*Luke*, XI, 21), and his saying, "It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of sea" (*Matthew*, XVIII, 6).

1. J. Macmurry, *The Clue to History*, p. 66.

2. C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 93.

But his utterances may have suffered in the process of editing by his disciples, and as against these isolated, ambiguous, pro-violence extracts, we have numerous instances where the Prince of Peace condemned the use of physical force and preached the law of love or non-resistance. Besides, much more important than what Jesus said is what he did by his life and death. His life is the story of intense suffering for the love of humanity. From the beginning of his ministry, when he rejected worldly power and refused to do homage to Satan, to the betrayal, the trial and the supreme redemptive act, the crucifixion, "the grand consummation of his career," Christ bore witness to the power of love and non-resistance—the Christian way of overcoming evil.

The entire teaching of Christ logically follows from his conception of the universal, loving fatherhood of God, and brotherhood of man. Jesus quotes two commandments of the *Old Testament*, "Thou shalt love thy God," and "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The two commandments, says Jesus, are like one another and on them hang all the law and the prophets.¹ And Jesus makes his valuable contribution to these commandments when he says, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy."

"But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you ;

"That you may be the children of your Father that is in Heaven ; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust."²

Jesus thus raises love from the level of natural impulse to that of deliberate intention.³

Love rules out the use of force in all its forms. And it is said that Jesus "when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, threatened not."⁴ His decision to reject force is

1. *Matthew*, XXII, 37-40.

2. *Matthew*, I, 43-45.

3. J. Macmurray, cited above, p. 68.

4. *Peter*, II, 23.

brought out on the occasion of his arrest. When Peter wishing to defend him drew his sword and cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant, Jesus rebuked him saying, "Put up again thy sword into his place ; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."¹

And we read in the Sermon :

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth ;

"But I say unto you, that you resist not evil ; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

"And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."²

We get the supreme instance, the model, of non-violent resistance in Jesus on the Cross as He prays, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."³

It is wrong to think that Jesus concentrated upon the achievement of an inward morality which left the world to Cæsar. He did not eschew all politics, nor did he advocate non-violent resistance only in personal as against group affairs. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life," said he, and the true way must necessarily make itself felt in every aspect of life, political, social, moral and spiritual. The records of the Baptism, the Temptation, the entry into Jerusalem and the trials before Caiaphas and Pilate make it clear that Jesus regarded himself as the Messiah. This, indeed, was the charge against him and he admitted it before Pilate.

1. *Matthew*, XXVI, 52.

2. *Matthew*, V, 38-42.

3. *Luke*, XXIII, 34.

According to the traditional Hebrew conception the Messiah was a national leader, a temporal King, who would overthrow the Roman overlord and restore Jewish liberty. Jesus, no doubt, strove to fulfil his nationalistic mission, but he said that his kingdom was not of this world. He preached the revolutionary doctrine of an altogether different kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven. His plan was that the Jews should give up ideas of violence and convert enemies into friends by his technique of love and non-violence and thus help in realizing the kingdom of his vision. His technique, it appears, included co-operation with the temporal power of the Roman Empire so far as it worked for the welfare of the people. Thus he asked Simon to pay the tribute money "for me and thee." This again seems to be his meaning in "Render unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's."¹ This does not mean withholding from God what is His due and Jesus revolted against the tyranny of the State as well as tradition, for according to him Sabbath was made for man and not man for Sabbath. In touching words he expressed his disappointment at the refusal of the Jews to accept the non-violent method of action.²

As H. G. Wells points out, the opposition to him and the circumstances of his trial and execution show clearly that to his contemporaries his doctrine stood for a transformation of human life in all its aspects.³ Jesus thus lived and died for a universal gospel, and to deny that his way of life is meant for all, collectively as well as individually, is to deny the basic truth of his doctrine.

Though Christ and his disciples said nothing on the subject of war, the Cross is obviously incompatible with the sword. Early Christians condemned violence and, by their refusal to join the Roman legions, courted severe punishments. But the principle of military service was soon condoned by the Church. In the beginning of the fourth century Constantine

1. *Luke*, XX, 25.

2. See, for example, *Luke*, XIII, 34, and XXIII, 28-30.

3. H. G. Wells, cited above, pp. 531-32.

patronized the Church, delivering it from prolonged persecution. In 314 A.D. the grateful Church made desertion from imperial armies liable to excommunication and it became the common practice for the Christian priests to accompany the armies. The tradition has lived up to our day in so far as priests are expected to act morally as recruiting-sergeants by blessing the army. It is significant that this moral degradation of the Church started when it acquired a political status.

In the middle ages the Christian Church glorified the crusades. At the same time many medieval sects, e.g., Albigenses, Vaudois, Lollards, Paulicians, Manicheans, Waldenses, Mennonites, stood uncompromisingly against all war and violence.

In the beginning of the 16th century Erasmus condemned the whole concept of violence and put forward persuasion as the alternative.

Thoreau, Tolstoy and many others were profoundly influenced by a mid-sixteenth century essay entitled *Of Voluntary Servitude* written by Etienne de La Boetie. He maintained that the authority of the rulers depends on the submission of the people and that it is more moral than physical in character. "It rests less on violence than on respect, that is, on the belief in the right to govern of those in power."¹

Meanwhile various Anabaptist sects—Mennonites, Simonians, Socinians, Brownists, Dunkers—continued uncompromisingly to condemn resort to violence under any circumstances. Many of these sects were non-litigants and "political non-participants," i.e., they were opposed to any participation in State activities which are, according to them, essentially violent. These sects suffered intensely for their convictions and many of them expired, some emigrating to America.

In 1660 was founded the famous Quaker Society of Friends by George Fox. Fox, Barclay and William Penn were the

1. Quoted by B. de Ligt, cited above, p. 105.

well-known 17th century exponents of Quaker pacifism. To the Quakers pacifism and non-resistance have for their basis the fundamental belief that each man's life is guided by an inner light which transcends even the *Bible* and which rules out any right to constrain men.¹ But unlike most Anabaptist sects, the Quakers are not against participation in politics. On the other hand, like Asoka, they take a positive attitude—the attitude of spiritualizing politics, curing it of all its violence and conducting the State on non-violent lines. In regard to war, too, the contribution of the Quakers has not only been negative, i.e., refusal to support the military establishment, but also positive in the form of efforts for peace and arbitration.²

The Quaker State in Pennsylvania was set up on the basis of Penn's treaty with the Red Indians concluded in 1682. Penn said to the Red Indians, "No advantage shall be taken on either side but all shall be openness and love. . . . We are the same as if one man's body were to be divided into two parts : we are all one flesh and blood."³ The disputes between the colonists and the Red Indians were to be decided by an arbitral tribunal. The State lasted for seventy years and its failure was due partly to the influx in the colony of other whites who reduced the Quakers to a minority and partly to the fact that troubles with the French on the Indian frontier led the Governor to take military measures inconsistent with the Quaker philosophy.⁴ But the Quakers in Pennsylvania as well as other colonies continued to enjoy immunity from violent attacks of the Red Indians. The unique success of the Quaker experiment in administering the State without any military defences whatsoever will stand as a source of encouragement to those striving for peace and non-violence.

The Doukhobors are a Russian peace sect. They observe ascetic rules of conduct, are strict vegetarians, are opposed to all forms of violence and deny allegiance to any authority

1. A. C. F. Beales, *History of Peace*, p. 31.

2. C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, pp. 92-3 & 97.

3. Quoted by A. C. F. Beales, cited above, p. 32.

4. B. de Lig. cited above, p. 45 and C. M. Case, cited above, p. 102.

that is not divine. Aylmer Maude calls them "essentially anarchistic."¹ During two hundred years of their existence they have suffered intensely for their pacific convictions. In the nineties of the last century they were harshly persecuted for their refusal to serve in the army. Many of them migrated to Canada in 1899 and have come into conflict with the Government there also. In Russia, too, the new Bolshevik regime had to persecute them for their stern refusal to enlist in the army and their dogged resistance to collective farms on the ground that these serve man rather than God.

Coming to the middle of the nineteenth century, the French revolutionary, Anselm Bellegarigue, anticipated to some extent Gandhiji's political technique. He believed that all government was based on violence and hence was an evil and preached the "theory of calm" to overcome the government by a refusal of assistance, i.e., by "abstention and inertia."²

Gandhiji has been influenced by the words and actions of Henry David Thoreau, the well-known American anarchist. He was the first to use the term "civil disobedience" in one of his speeches in 1849. His theory may be summed up as the maximum of co-operation with all people and institutions when they lead towards good and non-co-operation when they promote evil. Unlike Gandhiji, however, Thoreau justified not only passive, but also active (violent) resistance to the American Government in the struggle against slavery. He believed in man's natural impulses to goodness, argued for the supremacy, under all conditions, of conscience and held up the ideal of a future society without any government.

John Ruskin's *Unto This Last* has also been one of the transforming influences that have shaped Gandhiji's views. He has been especially influenced by Ruskin's ideal of manual labour. Gandhiji read this book in South Africa and drew from it three lessons. These are :

1. A. Maude quoted by C. M. Case, cited above, p. 115.
2. B. de Ligt, cited above, p. 109-110.

1. That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
2. That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
3. That a life of labour, i.e., the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman is the life worth living.¹

Ruskin's *Crown of Wild Olives* is also one of Gandhiji's favourites.

Gandhiji resembles Ruskin in several respects. Both preach the supremacy of the spirit and trust in the nobleness of human nature ; to both character is more important than intelligence ; both seek to moralize politics and economics ; both emphasise the priority of social regeneration to mere political reform ; both greatly distrust machinery and plead that, if employed at all, it should be so used as to free men and not enslave them ; both insist that the capitalist should practise a wise paternalism toward his employees.

Unlike Gandhiji, though like his own master, Carlyle, who equates Manhood suffrage with "Horsehood, Doghood, ditto," Ruskin distrusts the populace. His ideal, like that of Carlyle, is the rule of the wisest.² Ruskin believes not in democracy but in "the eternal superiority of some men to others, sometimes even of one man to all others" and upholds "the advisability of appointing such persons or person to guide, to lead or on occasion even to compel and subdue, their inferiors according to their own better knowledge and wiser will."³ Ruskin thus does not stand for non-

1. *Experiments*, II, pp. 107-8.
2. "You have no more business with politics," he said to the Glasgow undergraduates, "than you have with rat-catching . . . but I hate all liberalism as I do Beelzebub, and with Carlyle I stand, we two now alone in England, for God and the Queen." *The Works of Ruskin* (lib. ed.), Vol. XXXIV, pp. 548-9.
3. Quoted by E. Barker in *Political Thought from Spencer to Today*, p. 193. Another similar passage disparaging majorities is : "In every vital moment the right opinion is in the minority of one . . . see only that you set over every business vital to you, one man of sense, honour and heart." *The Works of Ruskin* (lib. ed.), Vol. XXXI, p. 505.

violence in principle. All the same he is against vengeance and retribution and urges the workers not to take part in armament industries. Unlike Gandhiji again, Ruskin favours the extension of the sphere of State interference.¹

Gandhiji's views are more akin to those of Tolstoy than to those of Ruskin.

Tolstoy's philosophy, which has been called Christian anarchism, is the application of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount to the solution of modern social and political problems. The core of Christ's teaching and the one adequate solution for human problems is, according to Tolstoy, love. Love is at the basis of Tolstoy's principle of non-resistance and non-co-operation which, as Aylmer Maude points out, are identical.² According to Maude the source of Tolstoy's doctrine is the Gospel text, "Resist not him . . . cloak also."³

Tolstoyan non-violence is rooted in the conception that it is a crime to impose one's will on any creature, to force it in any way. To quote from Tolstoy's famous letter to Gandhiji, dated Kocheti, September 7, 1910, "The renunciation of all opposition by force . . . means the law of love unperverted by sophistries. Love, or in other words the striving of men's souls towards unity and the submissive behaviour to one another that results therefrom, represents the highest and indeed the only law of life . . . any employment of force is incompatible with love as the highest law of life and . . . as soon as the use of force appears permissible even in a single case, the law itself is immediately negated."⁴

1. R. H. Wilenski, *John Ruskin*, pp. 296-8.

2. A. Maude's article on *Gandhi and Tolstoy* reprinted in the *Leader*, June 18, 1930.

According to Tolstoy the only way to make the world happy is to bring about a condition of the world wherein all beings could love others more than they love themselves. This is how he defines his law of happiness for all beings : "That I love others more than I love my own self." His letter to Romain Rolland, dated 4th Oct. 1887, published in *Modern Review* for January 1927, p. 88 (translated by Dr Kalidas Nag from the original French).

3. Quoted in this chapter on p. 22.

4. Leo Tolstoy, *Recollections and Essays*, pp. 435-6.

Tolstoy believes that the Christian civilization, because it claims to be Christian and permits defence by means of force, has grown up on this strange contradiction, and as the law of love does not prevail, for it admits of no exception, there remains no law but that of the strongest. Tolstoy condemns the State¹ and its machinery, law courts, police and military, private property and capitalism, even the schools, as all these offend against the law of love. He is opposed to the use of force, payment of taxes, and compulsory military service. He would replace organised society by informal co-operation, though he does not bother about giving the details of the ideal non-violent society.

As regards the method of bringing about such co-operation, Tolstoy is against violence and in favour of love, non-resistance and non-co-operation. He lays great stress on the moral regeneration of the individual. He urges a return to land and preaches the dignity of manual work. Tolstoy is also against legitimate marriage which he calls "domestic prostitution," for marriage leads men and women to use each other as instruments of pleasure. In the *Kreutzer Sonata* he maintains that sexual love is the worst of sins and pleads that the relation between man and wife should be transformed into brotherly and sisterly affection.

The Rev. J.J. Doke calls Gandhiji a disciple of Tolstoy.² Gandhiji also considers himself "a devoted admirer who owes much in life to him."³ He writes, "Next to the late Rajchandra, Tolstoy is one of the three moderns who have exerted the greatest spiritual influence on my life, the third being Ruskin."⁴ Gandhiji read *The Kingdom of God is Within You* fifty years back in South Africa when he believed in violence and was passing through a crisis of scepticism. "Its reading," he says, "cured me of my scepticism and

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1. To Tolstoy, in his own language, "the words 'a Christian state' resemble the words 'hot ice.' The thing is either not a state using violence, or it is not Christian." Quoted by Milford Q. Sibley in his article on *Modern Religious Pacifism* in *American Political Science Review*, June 1943.
 2. J. J. Doke, cited above, p. 3.
 3. *Y. I.*, I, p. 652.
 4. *Y. I.*, III, p. 843.

made me a firm believer in *ahimsa*.”¹

There are striking similarities between the doctrines of these two great modern apostles of non-violence. Both are ever vigilant seekers after truth and uniquely steadfast in its rigorous practice. “The heroine of my writings,” wrote Tolstoy, “she whom I love with all the forces of my being, she who always was, is, and will be beautiful, is Truth.”² Both denounce modern civilization as based on force and exploitation and pandering to the senses and so inherently immoral. Both are opposed to violent methods of fighting evil. Both lay stress on the reform of the individual, his inner self-perfection, as the first step towards social regeneration. Both concern themselves with the purity of means rather than the details of the ideal society. Again, both advocate an ascetic morality and preach extreme simplicity of life, bread-labour and virtual celibacy as being essential for the moral growth of the individual.

Gandhiji is, however, not a thorough-going Tolstoyan. The difference between their doctrines seems to be due to two reasons. Firstly, Gandhiji is far more practical than Tolstoy. Ever in close touch with life, Gandhiji is essentially a man of compromise in non-essentials. The need for compromise, he thinks, arises due to the relative nature of truth as perceived by man. Though scrupulous about his method, unlike Tolstoy, he is ever ready to adapt his actions to the demands of the changing world. The ideal is impossible of complete realization and we must try to approach it, he holds, as far as possible. Secondly, Gandhiji’s conception of non-violence is slightly different from that of Tolstoy. To the latter non-violence means avoidance of force in all its forms, the former

1. The poet jeweller Rajchandra was a distinguished Jaina reformer of Bombay. Gandhiji came into closest association with him on his return from England. He greatly influenced Gandhiji by his moral earnestness and deep religious nature and acted on many occasions as his guide and helper. In particular he helped Gandhiji in the study of Hindu religion. *Experiments*, Vol. I, Part II, Ch. I and pp. 323 and 475 ff. Dr J. N. Farquhar gives a brief account of his views and work in his *Modern Religious Movements*, pp. 327-8.

2. Quoted by Mahadeo Desai in an article in *V. I.*, III, p. 830.

lays emphasis on the motive and defines *ahimsa* as avoidance of injury or pain to any creature out of anger or from a selfish motive. In certain circumstances, however, even killing may be *ahimsa* according to Gandhiji.¹ As life involves some amount of violence, Tolstoy turned away from it ; Gandhiji, on the other hand, follows the *Gita* ideal of action without attachment and eagerly participates in life. Due to this vital difference, Gandhiji excels Tolstoy in working out the non-violent technique and in devising ways to remove social evils which Tolstoy so brilliantly exposed and passionately denounced.

The cult of peace and non-violence has gathered great strength since the times of Tolstoy. This is partly due to the tremendous increase in the destructiveness of war which has almost reached the peak of perfection and has become a far greater threat to mankind than ever before.

Benjamin Tucker, the American anarchist, bases his philosophy on the ground of the intelligent individual's natural self-interest. He recommends passive resistance to the oppressed masses for the reason that modern Governments, though they can easily crush violent revolt, cannot overcome passive resistance by military force. If one-fifth of the people, he argues, refuse to pay their taxes, it would cost more to try to collect them than what the rest would pay into the treasury. He advocates the elimination of political authority from society. The State has, according to him, always invaded the principle of liberty. He defines government as "the subjection of the non-invasive individual to an external will."² To him democracy is nothing but an invasion by all men upon one man. Tucker would, therefore, replace the State by voluntary associations, the members of which would retain the right to secede at will. He, however, recognises the right of defensive associations to employ, against invasive individuals, all repressive and punitive measures now employed by the State. The necessity for such repression will immensely diminish, for when men eliminate the State as well as the

1. See Ch. III *infra*.

2. Quoted by F. W. Coker in *Recent Political Thought*, p. 198.

inequitable economic system which the State maintains, crimes will naturally disappear.

Since 1815, and particularly since 1919, there has also been growing a movement to eliminate war. Before the present war the War Resisters' International of which the Peace Pledge Union was the British section, extended practically into all the countries of the world. The schemes of peace organisations centred on five fundamentals : arbitration and arbitration treaties, an international authority, codification of international law, sanctions and disarmament. Comprehensive anti-war propaganda was conducted by peace societies, though there was a lack of agreement among them on defensive war and on the place of non-violence in personal life. It is significant that the establishment of the League of Nations was taken as the fulfilment of many of the aspirations of the peace movement. The present international situation is ample evidence that wars between nations, against which the peace movement has been crusading, cannot be eliminated unless efforts are also made to banish violence from our individual and group life.

Many pacifist thinkers, i.e., Meijer-Wichmann, Roland Holst, Charles Naine, Aldous Huxley, Gerald Heard, etc., insist on the need of harmony between the end and the means. They expose the tragedy of modern socialism—the contradiction between its aim and its method. Its aim is essentially humanitarian—social regeneration and elimination of all forms of violence. But to achieve its aim it uses war, violence, and dictatorship. The use of this tactics develops qualities opposite of those envisaged in the socialist regime and thus the object is defeated.

The present war and the aggression leading to it have been a severe blow to pacifism in the West. Even some of the leading thinkers have recanted their faith in pure pacifism and supported military collaboration of well-armed States against aggressor States. To this group belong C. E. M. Joad, Bertrand Russel and Romain Rolland.

On the whole, pacifism in the West has been negative and passive rather than dynamic in its attitude. Fear of the con-

sequences of war, rather than love expressing itself through service and suffering, has been the important motive behind it. Besides, it generally begins and ends with conscientious objection thus taking a man out of struggle and yet giving him the satisfaction that he has done his duty. It has failed to develop a suitable technique of non-violent resistance against organized violence.

There have been during the last hundred and fifty years numerous instances of the use of non-violent resistance by individuals and groups. It is unnecessary to give details of all these instances or even to mention all of them.¹ Labour strikes have become the common feature of modern economic life. Besides these, non-violence has had its victories in other spheres of life also. Some of the outstanding instances outside India are the non-violent movement of Hungary in the middle of the 19th century under the leadership of Francis Deak, the prevention of a war between Norway and Sweden by socialists of the two countries by means of non-violent direct action in 1905, and the heroic non-violent struggle of the people of Western Samoa against the New Zealand Government (1920 to 1936). But group-resistance has mostly been of the passive resistance type.²

Gandhiji renovates the age-old philosophy of *ahimsa*. His great distinction consists in his researches in the possibilities of *ahimsa* in all walks of life and its application to large mass movements. Satyagraha, he is convinced, is the only way to solve the problems of mankind. "Non-violence is a universal law acting under all circumstances. Disregard of it is the surest way to destruction."³ But satyagraha is inseparable from the non-violent outlook on life. To be a real, effective satyagrahi the individual must comprehend the metaphysical convictions and ethical principles in which satyagraha is rooted.

1. Some of the references for these instances are : Fenner Brockway, *Non-co-operation in Other Lands* ; R. B. Gregg, *The Power of Non-violence*, Ch. VII ; C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion* ; and A. Huxley (ed.), *An Encyclopaedia of Pacifism*, article on *Non-violence*.
2. For difference between passive resistance and satyagraha see Ch. VII *infra*.
3. *H.*, July 15, 1939, p. 201.

CHAPTER II

METAPHYSICAL CONVICTIONS

“Most religious men I have met,” Gandhiji once remarked to Mr Polak, “are politicians in disguise ; I, however, who wear the guise of a politician, am at heart a religious man.”¹ “My bent is not political but religious,” he wrote in a letter to Dr Arundale in 1929.² These statements provide a key to Gandhian philosophy. In all his thought and action he takes his stand on the principles of religion and morality. These are the very breath of his being. He says, “. . . at the back of every word that I have uttered since I have known what public life is, and of every act that I have done, there has been a religious consciousness and a downright religious motive.”³

His political philosophy and political technique are only corollaries of his religious and moral convictions. For him politics bereft of religion is a death-trap because it kills the soul. Without the moral basis supplied by religion life would be a mere maze of ‘sound and fury signifying nothing.’

By religion, however, he means, not any particular creed—not, for example, Hindu religion, but that which underlies and harmonizes all religions, “which changes one’s nature, which binds one to the truth within and which ever purifies. It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless unless it has found itself, known its Maker, and appreciated the true correspondence between the Maker and itself.”⁴ In short, religion means “belief in the ordered moral government of the universe.”⁵ It is identical with morality.⁶ It is essentially practical and in no way

1. *Speeches, Appendix*. II, p. 40.

2. Quoted in *Vishal Bharat* (Hindi), October, 1938, p. 401.

3. *Y. I.*, III, p. 350.

4. *Speeches*, p. 807.

5. *Id.*, Feb. 10, 1940, p. 445.

6. *Ethical Religion*, pp. 23-4 ; *Experiments*, I, p. 5.

world-denying. It provides a moral basis to all other activities, and Gandhiji does not know religion apart from human activity.¹

In fact, Gandhiji looks upon politics as an unavoidable evil.² And it is religion that compels him not to eschew politics. The goal of life is self-realization which, Gandhiji believes, cannot be achieved unless he identifies himself with the whole of mankind and tries to advance the greatest good of all. This he cannot do unless he takes part in politics. For the whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes one indivisible whole, and social, economic, political and purely religious work cannot be divided into water-tight compartments.³ Political evils, for example, political subjection, unsuitable political institutions, etc.—are great hindrances to the realization of the greatest good of all, which is possible only in a non-violent State. Political freedom is essential for the emergence of this State. He has, therefore, no doubt whatsoever that “those, who say that religion has nothing to do with politics, do not know what religion means.”⁴ “. . . he who does not know what patriotism or feeling for one's country is does not know his true duty or religion.”⁵

A living, unshakable faith in God, an insistence on the primacy of spirit, is the core of his moral convictions. So immovable is his faith that he feels he may live without air and water but not without God,⁶ and that even if he were cut to pieces, God would give him the strength not to deny Him.⁷ He is definitely of opinion that the fullest life is impossible without such faith.⁸ He has always implied, and since the 1939 session of the Gandhi Seva Sangh he has been

1. *H.*, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 393.

2. *Speeches*, p. 807.

3. *H.*, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 393.

4. *Experiments*, II, p. 591.

5. *Gandhiji's African Jail Experiences* in J. H. Holmes, *Mahatma Gandhi, The World Significance*, p. 83.

6. *H.*, May 14, 1938, p. 109.

7. *Y. I.*, III, p. 504.

8. *H.* April 25, 1934, p. 84.

explicitly emphasizing, the principle that one is not competent to offer satyagraha unless one has a living faith in God.¹ It is necessary, therefore, to discuss in some detail the reasons why he considers faith in God indispensable for the satyagrahi and also his views about God and soul.

The whole science of satyagraha is based on the fundamental truths that the soul remains unconquered and unconquerable even by the mightiest physical force, and that every human being, however degraded, has in him the divine spark, i.e., limitless potentiality for growth and is capable of responding to kind, generous treatment.

Unless one has a living faith in God and in soul-force, he cannot resort to sayagraha whole-heartedly, with entire confidence and to the best advantage. In the words of Gandhiji, "This (living faith in non-violence) is impossible without a living faith in God. Without it he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation. Such courage comes from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all and that there should be no fear in the presence of God. The knowledge of the omnipotence of God also means respect for the lives of even those who may be called opponents or *goondas*."² "With the knowledge that the soul survives the body, he (the satyagrahi) is not impatient to see the triumph of truth in the present body. Indeed victory lies in the ability to die in the attempt to make the opponent see the truth which the satyagrahi for the time being expresses."³ To Gandhiji, therefore, "The first and the last shield and buckler of the non-violent person will be his unwavering faith in God."⁴ "The only weapon of the satyagrahi is God, by whatsoever name one knows Him. Without Him the satyagrahi is devoid of strength before an opponent armed with monstrous weapons. But he who accepts God as his only protector will remain unbent before the mightiest earthly power."⁵

1. *H.*, June 3, 1939, p. 146.
2. *H.*, June 18, 1938, p. 152.
3. *Speeches*, p. 504.
4. *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 318.
5. *H.*, Oct. 19, 1940, p. 319.

Let this not be dismissed as the irrational superstition of a mystic. God is not a mere escape or idle fiction. God is the integrating principle, the central truth of man. The finite cannot be understood unless we know the finite as rooted in the Infinite. Without faith in God man can have faith neither in himself nor in others. It is significant that the non-violent resisters of the past have almost always been firm believers in God.¹

Gandhiji does not mind how one defines God ; for he is conscious that "there are innumerable definitions of God, because His manifestations are innumerable."² As for himself, Gandhiji specially identifies Him with love, the dumb poor millions and above all Truth. "The word *Satya* (Truth) is derived from *sat* which means being. And nothing is or exists in reality except Truth." That is why *Satya* or Truth is the most important name of God. In fact it is more correct to say that Truth is God than to say that God is Truth.³ Nobody, not even the atheist, demurs to the necessity or the power of Truth. Besides, "God is Truth, but God is many other things also." That is why Gandhiji prefers to say that Truth is God.⁴

God or Truth, he believes, is not only the immanent reality but is also transcendent; he is not only in us but also out of us, not only the life of the Universe, but also beyond it as its Creator, Sustainer and Judge.⁵

Though God is infinite, perfect, and absolute, the nature of God is interpreted by a Hindu on the analogy of his own personality, which is a complex of cognition, affection and

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1. Many Western pacifist thinkers would agree with Gandhiji. Max Plowman of the Peace Pledge Union insists that for a pacifist it is essential to believe in God as "the symbol of supreme value" and "incarnate in every individual." Quoted in *Harijan*, June 25, 1938, p. 163.
 2. *Experiments*, I, p. 7.
 3. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 1.
 4. *H.*, May 25, 1935, p. 115.
 5. *H.*, Nov. 14, 1936, p. 314; Jan. 20, 1937, pp. 407 and 410; *V. I.*, II, p. 497.

will. To him God is a personal God with qualities of thought, love, and power, creating the universe as *Brahma*, redeeming it as *Vishnu* and judging it as *Shiva*. The Hindu tradition, at the same time, also emphasizes that personality is only a symbol to express the transcendent reality and that the difference between the philosophical idea of God as an all-embracing spirit and the devotional idea of a personal God is one of standpoint and not of essence.¹

Though Gandhiji is conscious that God is, strictly speaking, not a person, but an Idea, Truth, His own Law,² yet to a religious devotee like him the Hindu theistic conception of God as *Trimurti* comes very natural. God, he believes, is the personal God to those who need His touch, and a devotee can, through prayer and purification, establish personal communion with Him. In his writings we find far greater stress on love of God than on His functions of *srusti* and *laya* (creation and destruction).

God is the Creator, the Ruler and the Lord of the Universe and not a blade of grass moves but by His will.³

God is our judge, but He is long-suffering and patient and issues warnings to us.⁴ He is also terrible. "He metes out the same measure to us that we mete out to our neighbours. . . . With Him ignorance is no excuse."⁵ On numerous occasions, when Gandhiji felt that he had made a mistake, he also felt that God had warned him, and he retraced his steps. Even natural calamities, he believes, are no mere divine caprice but come to mankind as just retribution for their sins.⁶

1. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 107 and *The Heart of Hindustan*, pp. 90-1.

2. *H*, March 23, 1940, p. 55.

3. *H.*, Nov. 14, 1936, pp. 407 and 410.

4. *Y. L.*, III, p. 178.

5. *Y. L.*, I, p. 497.

6. *H.*, Feb. 2, 1934, pp. 1 and 14. Gandhiji discusses the reasons for this belief of his in *Harijan*, April 6, 1934, p. 61 and June 8, 1935, p. 135.

God is also the guide and the help of the helpless. A true *vaishnava*, Gandhiji is conscious of God every minute of his life whether asleep or awake.¹ He pines "to see God face to face" and often has "had faint glimpses of the Absolute Truth, God."² It is an unbroken torture to him that he is still so far from Him.³ He feels the sense of entire dependence on Him, humbly seeks His guidance and finds that "His voice has been increasingly audible as the years have rolled by."⁴ In the darkest despair, in the most terrible trial, at the last moment His help never fails Gandhiji, and this help is, to him, "the visible finger of the invisible God."⁵ Often in the name of God, in answer to His voice, he has undertaken fasts. And he has had real mystic experiences. Here is one of the most remarkable of these in his own words :

"It relates to my 21 days' fast for the removal of untouchability. I had gone to sleep . . . at about 12 o'clock in the night something wakes me up suddenly and some voice . . . whispers, 'Thou must go on a fast.'

" 'How many days?' I ask.

- The voice again said, 'Twenty-one days.'

'When does it begin?' I ask.

It says, 'You begin tomorrow.'⁶

" . . . My mind was unprepared for it, disinclined for it. But the thing came to me as clearly as anything could be."⁷

1. *YI*, II, p. 65. "With my hand on my breast, I can say that not a minute in my life am I forgetful of God."

2. *Experiments*, I, pp. 4 & 8.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

4. *II*, May 6, 1933.

5. *Experiments*, II, p. 432.

6. *H*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 373.

7. *H*, May 14, 1938 p. 110. He had another similar experience of which he gives a graphic description in *Harijan* of May 6, 1933.

The short-sightedness of modern scientific outlook may rule out as mere delusion such uncommon spiritual experiences. But according to the Indian tradition, if a seeker has integrated his personality and risen to the level of what the *Gita* describes as *buddhi-yoga* (*Gita*, II, 49 & 51 ; X, 10 ; XVIII, 57) and what Shri Aurobindo Ghosh calls the "supra-mental plane", he can have an insight into the Reality and discern the Truth. Undoubtedly for the last 50 years the one constant endeavour of Gandhiji has been progressive self-integration and the steadfast pursuit of spiritual discipline essential for the *sthitaprajna*.

Though personally a theist, Gandhiji is, in his ideas about God, extremely liberal and in no way dogmatic. We have seen how he identifies God with Truth. He also identifies Him with Love, Ethics and Law, Conscience, Purest Essence, etc. God, he once said, is "faith in oneself multiplied to the nth degree."¹ "You believe in some principle, clothe it with life, and say that it is your God. . . . I should think it enough."²

To Gandhiji there is no antithesis between God and man. The soul is the only reality in man as well as in the lower order of creation. It transcends time and space and unifies all apparently separate existents. "I believe", he writes, "in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity."³ Again, "I believe in *advaita*, I believe in the essential unity of man and for that matter of all that lives."⁴ Unity of God and unity of all life in one God is, he says, the message of the *vedas*.⁵

This great truth, the fundamental unity of all life, a principle far higher than that of the mere brotherhood of man, makes man not the lord but servant of God's creation.⁶ The unity of soul and its nature lead to another conclusion of great significance to his philosophy. The soul is God-head within man; it is self-acting; it persists even after death; its existence does not depend upon the physical body; it is matter rarefied to the utmost limit. Hence whatever happens to one body must affect the whole of matter and the whole of spirit.⁷ That is why if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him, and if one man falls, the whole

1. *H.*, June 3, 1939, p. 151.

2. *H.*, June 17, 1939, p. 167.

3. *Y.J.*, II, p. 79.

4. *Y.J.*, II, p. 421.

The famous texts 'Tat twamasi' (Thou art That) and 'Soham' (I am He) and the statement of Jesus, "I and My Father are one" and the Biblical statement, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He Him" express this very idea of consubstantiality of the spirit in man and God. Sir S. Radhakrishnan points out that many Western philosophers including Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Spinoza, Bradley, etc., accept this principle of unity of God and man (*An Idealist View of Life*, Ch. III).

5. *H.*, March 30, 1934, p. 55.

6. *H.*, Dec. 26, 1936, p. 365.

7. *H.*, Nov. 12, 1938, pp. 326-7.

world falls to that extent.¹

There is obviously no comparison between soul-force and physical force. "Great as the other forces of the world are . . . soul-force is the greatest of all."² He identifies soul-force with non-violence and points out that imperfect man cannot grasp the whole of that Essence—he would not be able to bear its full blaze—but even an infinitesimal fraction of it, when it becomes active within him, can work wonders.³

But what is the basis of his belief in the existence of God and soul? The question is vital to Gandhiji's political philosophy, for Gandhiji identifies truth with God, and so the right way of apprehending spiritual reality indicates the principles which should, in ethically baffling situations, guide the satyagrahi in determining truth and deciding whether a particular plan of action is right or wrong.

Before stating Gandhiji's views on the question, we may briefly describe the three important avenues of knowledge of reality. These are sense perception, logical reasoning and intuitive apprehension. Sense perception cannot go beyond external qualities of objects. Many Western philosophers, e.g., Hegel, Bosanquet, etc., hold that the ultimate nature of the universe can be grasped by thought or reason. According to them the real is rational. Thus Bosanquet defines reality as the object affirmed by thought. On the other hand according to the seers of India as well as many Western thinkers, reality can be apprehended by intuition and not by unaided reasoning or intellect.⁴ Intellect, it has been pointed out, cannot grasp the self, the knower, the condition and the presupposition of all knowledge.⁵ Thus 'I am' does not depend

1. *V.J.*, II, p. 421.

2. *H.*, August 22, 1936, p. 220.

3. *H.*, Oct. 30, 1937, p. 326.

4. Among others, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Pascal, Bergson, etc., admit that our major convictions are born of intuition. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*, Ch. IV.

5. "That by whom every thing is known, how could he know himself? How is it possible to know the knower?"

येनेदं सर्वं विजानाति तं केन विजानीयाद्विज्ञातामरे केन विजानीयात्।

Yagnavalkya in the *Brihadaranyak*.

Kant says similarly, "What I must presuppose in order to know the object I can never know as an object."

on 'I think', for then the latter will have to be proved an so on to infinite regress. Consciousness of self can com only by intuition, not by reasoning. Even as regards externa *objects discursive intellect* confines itself to the discernibl *aspects*. Thus *conceptual knowledge about a thing is onl* the appearance of a thing, it is not the reality. Unlike sensi perception and discursive reasoning, intuitive insight is the activity of the whole mind.¹ Intuition is not opposed to intellect or sense perception. It is supersensuous and super-intellectual in character. It combines the directness of the senses and the consciousness of the intellect. We intuit a thing by rising above the subject-object duality and identifying ourselves with it, by being it. Thus in intuitive knowledge being is knowing and knowing is being, and just as self-knowledge is self-evident, intuitive knowledge is also self-evident.¹

Gandhiji, like many other thinkers, considers senses and reasoning as inadequate media of apprehending the Absolute Reality. God, says he, "is indescribable, inconceivable and immeasurable." God transcends the senses and the intellect. "We must ever fail to perceive Him through the senses because He is beyond them. We can feel Him, if we will but withdraw ourselves from the senses. The divine music is incessantly going on within ourselves, but the loud senses drown the delicate music."² "The intellect, if anything, acts as a barrier."³ So realization to be infallible must be outside the senses and intellect, it must have for its basis a living faith. The source of faith is the heart.³ By faith, as the following passage shows, Gandhiji seems to mean intuition : "Faith does not contradict reason but transcends it. Faith is a kind of sixth sense which works in cases which are without the purview of reason."⁴ "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," said Jesus Christ. To Gandhiji also the

1. See Sir S. Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*.

2. *H.*, June 13, 1936, p. 141.

3. *H.*, June 18, 1938, p. 153.

4. *H.*, March 6, 1937, p. 26.

intuition of a pure heart is the source of realization.¹

Faith and intuition are not only our mainstay in religious experience but are also the basis of all creative thought, in fact, of all knowledge. Self-knowledge or self-certainty, the basis of all proof, the presupposition of all knowledge, as pointed out above, does not admit of a proof but is an intuitive apprehension. To quote Sir S. Radhakrishnan on the importance of intuition, "If intuitive knowledge does not supply us with universal major premises which we can neither question nor establish our life will come to an end. The ethical soundness, the logical consistency, the aesthetic beauty of the universe are assumptions of science and logic, art and morality, but are not irrational assumptions. They are apprehensions of the soul, intuitions of the self, quite as rational as the physical world or the intellectual schemes, though not grasped in the same way. Disbelief in them means complete scepticism."²

But though God transcends the intellect, "it is possible to reason out the existence of God to a limited extent."³ What Gandhiji means by this statement seems to be that though intellect has its limitations, it leaves us free, as Kant also held, to believe in the existence of God.

One of the arguments that Gandhiji gives is that the universe cannot be interpreted without postulating a transcendent reference. To quote him "... there is orderliness in the Universe, there is an unalterable Law governing everything and every being that exists or lives. It is not a blind law; for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings and, thanks to the marvellous researches of Sir J. C.

1. Perhaps Gandhiji avoids the word intuition because it is associated with sporadic flashes of truth. In a paper on *The Status and the Role of Buddhi in Kathopanishad and Bhagwat Gita* published in *Review of Philosophy and Religion* (Jan. 1940) Prof. Jaideva Singh suggests "synoptic vision" or "spiritual vision" as a substitute for intuition.
2. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 156.
3. *Y. J.*, III, p. 870.

Bose, it can now be proved that even matter is life. That law then which govern all life is God. Law and the law-giver are one.”¹

Moreover, the method of religion, Gandhiji points out, is not far different from that of science. Scientific truths can be verified only by following the prescription given for comprehending the facts which are taken for granted. Thus we cannot understand electricity except by the galvanometer test. “Precisely in that manner speak the *Rishis* and the Prophets. They say anybody following the path they have trodden can realize God.”² To reject the testimony of the scriptures of the world and the experience of an unbroken line of *Rishis* and Prophets is to deny oneself.³

Further, our denial of God and His law will not liberate us from its operation, whereas humble and mute acceptance of divine authority makes life’s journey easier.⁴

It is unnecessary to enter into a discussion about these reasons. Kant has shown that understanding is incapable of comprehending the noumenal order and that all arguments employed to prove the existence of God are defective. Gandhiji himself believes that realisation is impossible through the senses and reason. Reason can only demonstrate the rationality of the conviction about the existence of God when this conviction arises intuitively.

It is significant that modern scientific thought tends to suggest that the spirit is the only reality behind the cosmic process.⁵ This is not to say that science can definitely prove

1. *Y.I.*, III, p. 871.

2. *H.*, June 13, 1936, p. 140.

3. *Y.I.*, III, p. 871; *H.*, June 13, 1936, p. 140.

4. *Y.I.*, III, p. 871.

5. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, *Kalki*, pp. 56-7 ; A Huxley, *Ends and Means*, pp. 259-60 ; R. D. Ranade’s address entitled *A Philosophy of Spirit*, in *Review of Philosophy and Religion*; December 1938; E. W. Barnes, *Scientific Theory and Religion*; J. Needham, *Science, Religion and Reality* (specially essays by Edington and Needham).

the existence of God. Positively it can raise a presumption in favour of it. Reasoning can do no more. Negatively these researches rule out the mechanomorphic cosmology, that is, the conception of the universe as a self-explanatory mechanism every part of which is determined by its relation to the whole.

To sum up, Gandhiji insists that the Divine is the central truth in man and that firm faith in the Divinity or God is indispensable for good life as well as for the use of non-violent resistance. No one will, we hope, dispute the fact that Gandhiji is, though himself a theist, extremely liberal in his conception of God. God is to him only another name for the Reality, the Truth, the Law, the Harmony that pervades the universe. His view that belief in God and soul is a matter of faith and intuition is not only consistent with the traditions of Indian Philosophy but has also the support of many Western thinkers.

Gandhiji believes in the doctrines of *karma* and rebirth. According to him, "The law of *karma* is inexorable and impossible of evasion. There is thus hardly any need for God to interfere. He laid down the law and as it were retired."¹

As for the doctrine of rebirth, he writes, "I believe in rebirth as much as I believe in the existence of my present body. I therefore know that even a little effort is not wasted."²

These two doctrines are no mere unproved dogmas : they are laws of life deduced by the Indian seers from spiritual in-

1. *Experiments*, I, p. 563.

Cf. Sir S. Radhakrishnan (*An Idealist View of Life*, p. 338) "God cannot forgive the criminal even when he repents, for the moral order which is conceived in love, not in hatred, requires that wrong-doing should have its natural consequences." The Christian scriptures also refer to the law. Thus, "Be not deceived ; God is not mocked ; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." *Galatians*, VI, 7. Jesus said on the Mount, "Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged : and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." *Matt.*, VII, 1-2.

2. *V.I.*, II, p. 1204.

sight and verified by experience. The law of *karma* has been called the law of moral continuity or moral causation.¹ It is the law governing human growth. According to Indian philosophy our actions, i.e., those that are motivated, leave behind *samskaras*, or mento-emotional impressions. The latter are dynamic and causal factors and determine our future not only in this life but also in subsequent lives.² According to this law our future will grow out of the present even as the latter is the outcome of our past. However, the emphasis is not so much on retribution as on continuity. The doctrine of *karma* is the only rational explanation of human inequality, at least if we admit a purposive Reality behind the universe.

As for the theory of rebirth,³ which has been current among the Hindus since the time of the *Rig Veda*, it stands to reason that so far as man has not fully realized himself he should continue to have opportunities for self-development, and death should not put an end to these opportunities. "If death were the end, God's purpose in creating us would be frustrated, for most of us die unrepentant and in sin."⁴ And this would be a serious limitation of God's nature.

The acceptance of the law of *karma*, however, does not mean to Gandhiji that our life and activities are completely determined. Such determination paralyses moral effort and cuts at the very root of ethics. It also denies creativeness to human spirit and deprives man of the privilege of establishing his own government. There is no antithesis between the law of *karma* and the freedom of will. In fact, the doctrine of *karma* implies freedom, for it lays down that man is the architect of his own destiny. Continuity with the past implies creative freedom of the individual. No doubt our previous

1. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*, Ch. VIII.
Sir S. Radhakrishnan, *The Heart of Hindustan*, pp. 7 & 111.
2. The article on *Karma* in the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* in *Review of Philosophy and Religion*, April 1939, pp. 27 & 33.
3. Sir S. Radhakrishnan gives a brief account of the long history of the doctrine in *An Idealist View of Life*, pp. 286-7.
4. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, *The Heart of Hindustan*, p. 112.

karmas limit the range for the exercise of our free will. "The free-will we enjoy is less than that of a passenger on a crowded deck."¹ But the little freedom that we have is real in the sense that we are free to choose how we use that freedom.¹ God, the greatest democrat the world knows, Gandhiji points out, "leaves us unfettered to make our own choice between evil and good."² The right to err, which means the freedom to try experiments, is the universal condition of progress.

But though our will is free, "we cannot command results; we can only strive."³ Besides, "Man can change temperament, can control it, but cannot eradicate it. God has not given him so much liberty. If the leopard can change his spots then only can man modify the peculiarities of his spiritual constitution."⁴ Thus Gandhiji does not believe in complete freedom which might enable man to sever himself from or transcend nature. Such freedom will mean chaos.

Due to his belief in the spiritual nature of man, Gandhiji rejects the commonly accepted view that man is entirely the creature of the *milieu*. He does not, however, underrate the influence of the latter. He believes that "the majority of people are controlled by their environment,"⁵ but he also holds that man should try to live by self-direction, i.e., by the exercise of his will, rather than by mere habit.⁶

1. *H.*, March 23, 1940, p. 55.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 497. Many thinkers hold that the present, though conditioned by the past, is not determined by it and that man uses the posited future to control his behaviour. See, for example, David L. Miller, *The Calendar Theory of Freedom*, in *Journal of Philosophy*, XLI, 12, pp. 320 ff. The well-known postulate of modern social thought that cause implies a statistical probability of the occurrence of the effect rather than absolute control over it, also rules out absolute determinism.

3. *H.*, May 6, 1939, p. 112.

4. *South Africa*, p. 219. Cf. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, "Life is like a game of bridge. The cards in the game are given to us. . . . They are traced to past karma, but we are free to make any call as we think fit and lead any suit. Only we are limited by the rules of the game. We are more free when we start the game than later on when the game has developed and our choices become restricted." *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 277.

5. *Y.I.*, III, p. 314.

6. *An Interview with Mahatma Gandhi* by N. K. Bose in *Modern Review* for October 1935.

Closely connected with the problem of free will is the problem of evil. To Gandhiji evil is real only from the limited human standpoint. For God there is nothing good, nothing evil.¹ But the conception of relativity of good and evil is not acceptable to him, for its application to problems of actual life would lead us morally astray.² "Good and evil are, for human purposes, from each other distinct and incompatible, being symbolic of light and darkness . . ."³ "Evil in itself is sterile. It is self-destructive, it exists and flourishes through the implication of good that is in it. Science teaches us that a lever cannot move a body unless it has got a resting point outside the body against which it is applied. Similarly in order to overcome evil one must stand wholly outside it, that is, on the firm solid ground of unadulterated good."⁴ Thus purity of means is essential for minimising evil.

Gandhiji also believes that evil is the result of man's abuse of his free will.⁵ At the same time he is not oblivious of the place of evil in the scheme of progress. Evolution, he points out, is always experimental, and all progress is gained through mistakes and their rectification. Besides, the principles of *karma* and rebirth suggest that through a gradual process man will be able to minimise evil.

Gandhiji is, however, concerned not so much with philosophical and theological aspects of evil as with the specific kinds of evil, political, social and economic. All through his long public life his pre-occupation has been a relentless war against evil. In this crusade he does not neglect the *milieu*. He has devised a new moral strategy. His philosophy deals with the method of regulating, along non-violent lines, group-life in its political, economic, national and international aspects. But nearest his heart, in the centre of his consciousness, is the individual. The first step lies with the

1. *H.*, Sep. 2, 1935, p. 233.

2. *Y.I.*, I, p. 680.

3. *H.*, Feb. 20, 1937, p. 9.

4. *Y.I.*, I, pp. 225-6.

5. Gandhiji's statement after the Gandhi-Irwin Agreement. *History of the Congress*, p. 751.

individual whose moral regeneration is the primary concern of Gandhiji's philosophy. He discusses the goal of human life and the way the individual should live to realize this goal. These ethical principles are an integral part of Gandhiji's political philosophy, for a man can become a good citizen and a true satyagrahi only by disciplining his life according to these principles.

CHAPTER III

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES, THE END AND THE MEANS

The ultimate object of man's life is, according to Gandhiji, self-realization. Self-realization means seeing God face to face, realizing Absolute Truth, attaining *moksha*. He believes in the principle of spiritual unity. So the immediate service of human beings becomes a necessary part of the endeavour, because the only way to find God is to see Him in His creation and to be one with it. The individual must work not only for his own spiritual freedom but also for that of his fellow beings. Thus Gandhiji reconciles self-realization with service to society. The conception that salvation can be sought in the seclusion of solitude is not acceptable to him. Self-realization to him means realization of "the greatest good of all."¹ "The greatest good of all," or, as he calls it in Gujarati, *sarvodaya*, also includes political progress, for political degeneration is a great hindrance to comprehensive moral and spiritual regeneration. Politics, however, is only a part of this aim. Gandhiji also insists that the best way to serve all is to serve one's own country, for one's countrymen are one's nearest neighbours.²

Closely connected with the ultimate end is the problem of means. Communists, Fascists as well as most practical politicians believe in the maxim, "the end justifies the means." That is, if the end is desirable, even means like

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 956.

2. *H.*, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 226. For a detailed discussion of Gandhiji's emphasis on the neighbourhood see Ch. IV *infra*.

cunning, deceit and violence are justified, if they help us to achieve the end.

In Gandhian philosophy means and ends are convertible terms.¹ The two are inseparable and should be equally pure. That the end is high and laudable is not enough for him, the means too must be moral. In fact, means are, to him, everything.²

This emphasis on means is partly due to the fact that man can only strive, he cannot command results. "We have always control over the means and never on the ends."³ Besides, the end grows out of the means. To quote Gandhiji, "As the means so the end."⁴ "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree ; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree."⁵ The Gita doctrine of *nish-kam karma* (action without attachment) also teaches us that a good deed produces only a good result.⁶ So Gandhiji believes that "if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself,"⁷ and that realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of means.⁸ To him, "the attempt made to win *swaraj* is *swaraj* itself."⁹

Further, Gandhiji has personal experience of how, whenever he has compromised the means, progress on the path of truth and non-violence has received a setback. The Rajkot affair is an instance. By seeking the intervention of the Paramount power—a sign of impatience which is a form of violence—he failed to convert the opponent.

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 435.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 364.

3. Gandhiji quoted in the *History of the Congress*, p. 979.

4. *Y.I.*, II, p. 364.

5. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 60.

6. *Y.I.*, I, p. 714.

7. *H.*, Feb. 11, 1939, p. 8.

8. *Y.I.*, II, p. 364. Cf. Dewey, "The Kind of Means used determines the kind of consequences actually reached, the ends. . . . You may set up ends that are intrinsically desirable but what you actually get will depend upon the means you use to attain them." Quoted by R. B. Gregg in *The Power of Non-violence*, p. 343.

9. *Speeches*, p. 720.

Gandhiji's theory seems to us to be the only correct view of the relation between the end and the means. The opposite theory that the good end justifies all means, even violent means, is dangerous in practice and unsound ethically. The theory permits recourse to violence, fraud, untruth, opportunism, etc., provided the end is just. But these means, instead of helping us to advance on the path of progress, lead us to regard human beings as means rather than ends, deaden our finer feelings and result in oppression and cruelty. Besides, there can generally be no certainty that a violent action is always motivated only by a good end. The tyrant and the terrorist invariably plead laudable ends when perpetrating the most outrageous crimes. Further, it is dangerous ethics to make the success of an action or policy the criterion of its propriety. There is, moreover, all the difference between what passes for success, quick results mostly short-lived, and real, enduring achievements that require a long period of gestation. Violence and deception, terror and machiavellian diplomacy might seem to score for the time being over truth and love, justice and open-dealing. But the victory is partial and transitory and the gains mere burdens. Good means alone can lead us to lasting peace and progress. History as well as contemporary experience teach us that violence engenders violence, revenge leads to counter-revenge and a war sows the seeds of other wars. The last war, ostensibly fought for Justice and Democracy, bears ample testimony to the truth of this argument.

If we believe in the ultimate aim stated above and in the fundamental unity of life, good ends will mean in the words of Aldous Huxley "a state of greatest possible unification." This can be obviously achieved by intrinsically unifying, i.e., good means and not by separative or divisive, i.e., bad means.¹ According to Tolstoy, "All that tend to unify mankind belong to the Good and the Beautiful. All that tend to dis-unite are Evil and Ugly."²

1. A. Huxley, *Ends and Means*, pp. 320-21.

2. A letter of Tolstoy to Romain Rolland translated from the French by Dr Kalidas Nag. *Modern Review*, Jan. 1927.

Gandhiji's emphasis on the importance of means should not be misconstrued as implying that the end is, with him, only a secondary consideration. He believes that the means and the end are inseparably connected and is eager that the means used should in no way detract from the moral character of our end. Hence his repeated insistence that our means must be as pure as our end and that in regard to our means we must take our stand on "the firm solid ground of unadulterated good." His effort to give concrete expression, in the form of satyagraha, to this principle of moral approximation of the end and the means is, perhaps, the most unique contribution of our times to the philosophy and technique of revolution.

What then are the means that Gandhiji prescribes for the realization of the ultimate end? Self-realization, he says, requires self-purification.¹ Self-purification requires an ethical discipline. According to Gandhiji, ". . . he who is not prepared to order his life in unquestioning obedience to the laws of morality cannot be said to be a man in the full sense of the word."² This ethical outlook is the backbone of Gandhiji's political philosophy even as his ethical principles have for their foundation his metaphysical convictions. To him the moral discipline of the individual is the most important means of social reconstruction, and it is as vital to his philosophy as the capture of political power and State machinery are to Socialism and Fascism. The content of the ethical discipline will also determine the structure of the non-violent State.

Gandhiji gives us the moral principles which should be observed as vows by mankind in general. Most of these principles, which he laid down in 1916 for being observed in the Satyagraha Ashrama, Sabarmati, are the maxims of life enjoined for thousands of years by the Hindu *shastras* as being indispensable for moral growth. The first five of these vows, i.e., *satya* (truth), *ahimsa* (non-violence), *asteya* (non-stealing), *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *brahmacharya*

1. *Experiment*, II, p. 592.

2. *Ethical Religion*, p. 36.

(celibacy), are *yamas* or cardinal restraints. For long years before 1916 Gandhiji had endeavoured to live up to these ideals, and he has modified and amplified them in the light of his experience.

Vows,¹ Gandhiji thinks, are a moral discipline absolutely necessary for self-realization. They are a source of strength, for they mean unflinching determination to observe moral laws. In the absence of vows we may be unable to stand against temptations and may bend before discomforts. The refusal to take vows, moreover, is an indication of weakness and betrays a subtle desire for the things to be avoided. Vows should, however, be taken only on points of universally recognized principles.² But "the taking of a vow does not mean that we are able to observe it completely from the very beginning, it does mean constant and honest effort in thought, word and deed with a view to its fulfilment."³

Truth, the pole star of his life and philosophy, comes first among these vows.⁴

Gandhiji distinguishes between truth as a vow or means, i.e., relative truth as perceived by finite individuals in relation to a particular set of thoughts and circumstances, and Truth as *summum bonum*, i.e., Absolute, Universal, Infinite Truth which exists beyond and unconditioned by space and time.⁵

In the sense of Absolute Truth Gandhiji identifies Truth with God. To him Truth is God and God is Truth. In

1. According to Gandhiji, "To do at any cost something that one ought to do constitutes a vow." *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 75.
2. *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 9, 73 and 76. *Experiments*, I, p. 481.
3. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 27.
4. Cf. Jesus, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." John, VIII, 32. Again, "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." John, XVIII, 37.
5. According to Prof J. H. Muirhead the West has inherited from the Greeks the distinction between "Knowing and Being—reality as it presents itself to our minds, and reality as it is or would be to the divine mind." Sir S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 380. The distinction made by Gandhiji between relative and Absolute Truth seems to resemble the distinction between Knowing and Being.

chapter II we have pointed out how, according to Gandhiji, Truth or *Satya*, which means 'real existent,' is "the only correct and fully significant name of God." Truth in perfection includes all knowledge (*Chit*) and the latter is the source of eternal bliss (*Anand*). Hence we know God as *Sat-chit-anand*, one who combines in Himself Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.¹ Gandhiji worships God as Truth only ; he is devoted to none but Truth.²

The entire philosophy of satyagraha is based on the fact that Truth alone can be victorious, for Truth is 'that which is,' while untruth means 'non-existent.' "If untruth does not so much as exist its victory is out of the question. And truth being that which is can never be destroyed."³

But man, even if he is an uncommonly developed soul like Gandhiji, can have but faint, fleeting glimpses of Absolute Truth.⁴ "We cannot through the instrumentality of this ephemeral body see face to face Truth which is Eternal."⁵

How then to realize Absolute Truth? According to Gandhiji to advance towards Absolute Truth, we should hold by the relative truth, i.e., what we consider to be truth.⁶ To realize *satya* one must be a satyagrahi. Devotion to *satya* as we know it, being true to the light as we see it, is the road to the realization of Eternal Truth. To Gandhiji there is no religion higher than Truth.⁷ Every moment of his life he is trying to follow the truth of his conception counting no cost too great.

The law of Truth does not refer merely to truth of speech, it also refers to truth of action and, what is equally important, truth of thought. Nor is truth merely a "cloistered virtue." Truth has a reference to all spheres of life including politics. Search for truth, which should be pursued through the service

1. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 2.

2. *Experiments*, I, p. 7 ; *H.*, May 25, 1935, p. 115.

3. *South Africa*, p. 433.

4. *Experiments*, I, p. 8 ; *Experiments*, II, p. 590.

5. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 9.

6. *H.*, May 25, 1935, p. 114 ; *Experiments*, I, p. 8.

7. *Ethical Religion*, p. 51.

of all, means ceaseless effort for progress and refinement in all spheres of life and willingness to risk one's all for the cause which one clearly conceives to be true. If the individual fails to do so he departs from the path of truth, denies the soul in himself, tries to frustrate reality and, as a consequence, courts moral ruin. Truth thus also means right social relations including political freedom of one's own country as well as of other countries.

Truth rules out prejudice, evasion, secrecy and deception as well as exaggeration, suppression or modification of reality. It requires that we should never be afraid of confessing our mistakes or retracing our steps. Truth also implies mutual toleration and avoidance of dogmatism and bitterness ; for truth as discerned by man is always relative and fragmentary. While, therefore, it is a good guide for individual conduct, imposition of that conduct upon all will be an insufferable interference with everybody's freedom of conscience.¹ Moreover, "bitterness blurs our vision and to that extent disables one from seeing even the limited truth."² Bitterness or harshness also offends against the principle of the fundamental unity of soul ; it makes us forget the unity and is divisive and separative. According to Gandhiji, therefore, "one had better not speak it (truth) if one cannot do so in a gentle way. . . . Truth without non-violence is not truth but untruth."³ But non-violent truth or gentle speech does not mean hypocrisy or circumlocutory speech. "Harsh Truth may be uttered courteously and gently, but the words would read hard. To be truthful you must call a liar a liar—harsh words perhaps, but the use is inevitable."⁴ To illustrate the point Gandhiji gives the instance of Jesus, "Jesus knew the generation of vipers, minced no words in describing them but pleaded for mercy for them."⁵ The intention behind the words must not be to do harm to the opponent.⁵

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 1182.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 1286.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 1295.

4. *II.*, Feb. 6, 1937, p. 414.

II., Dec. 19, 1936, p. 362.

Gandhiji has dedicated his life to the searching quest of truth in its various aspects in his own life as well as in that of his nation. The method of his researches is the usual scientific method of observation, intuitional and intellectual hypothesis and experimental test. Whenever he notices some error he readily admits it and varies the experiment so as to discover the proper way of solving the particular social problem. He always makes the first test of an hypothesis on himself, before he asks any one else to try it.¹ In the words of R. B. Gregg “. . . he is a great scientist, in the realm of social truth. He is great because of his choice of problems, because of his methods of solution, because of the persistence and thoroughness of his search and because of the profundity of his knowledge of the human heart.”²

According to Gandhiji every man has the right and the capacity to determine truth for himself,³ and it is this essential virtue, viz., the ability to determine truth for himself, which separates man from the brute. Undoubtedly for a person who seeks to evolve truth by his own efforts, who seeks to determine truth independently, a high moral and intellectual equipment is necessary. But others, who merely apprehend, accept and pursue this truth evolved by developed souls and suffer in the pursuit of this truth, need not be so highly developed. This is borne out by the history of satyagraha movements in India and outside. Indians in South Africa or the Pathans of the North Western Frontier Province who suffered intensely for the sake of truth were people of ordinary cultural and moral level. Gandhiji believes that masses have the capacity to suffer for Truth, though this capacity, he admits, may be under certain circumstances limited.

As for an independent search after truth, it is necessary to remember that truth can be experienced only by leading an intensely moral life. In Gandhiji's opinion, constant endeavour (*abhyas*) and indifference to other interests of life (*vairagya*) and the vows of truth, non-violence, *brahma-*

1. Sir S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 80.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 80-1.

3. For Gandhiji's views given in this paragraph see *Y.I.*, I, pp. 34-6.

charya, non-stealing, non-possession, etc. are indispensable for the realization of truth. Only those who undergo this moral discipline can properly claim to hear the voice of conscience in regard to truth. Gandhiji holds that these observances are deducible from truth and are meant to subserve it.¹

Truth can be realised only by means of *ahimsa*. Violence which has its roots in divisive propensities like anger, selfishness, lust etc., cannot take us to the goal. For violence is untruth (*asatya*), i.e., non-existent. If untruth endured and nothing were true to itself and to others, if all laws of life and nature were uncertain and undependable, the universe would turn into chaos.

But why is violence untruth? For one thing truth as known to man is relative and never absolute. People look at a thing from different angles and conscience is not the same thing for all. No man can claim to be absolutely in the right. Pursuit of truth, therefore, does not admit of violence being inflicted on one's opponent who must be weaned from error by patience and sympathy, i.e., by self-suffering.² For even if the cause is unjust, none else except the person pursuing it suffers.

Besides, violence attacks not only sin and evil but also the sinner and the evil-doer. This is offending the greatest Truth, the unity and sacredness of all Being.³ Pursuit of truth means realization of this unity through love and service of all, i.e., willingness to suffer for all. Violence interferes with the realization of this unity both in the case of the violent man and his victim by arousing in them feelings of anger, hatred, fear, etc.

Moreover, truth which is the object of our quest is not outside ourselves but within. The more we take to violence in dealing with those who create difficulties, the more we

1. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 16.

2. *Y.I.*, I. p. 36 ; *V.I.*, II. p. 1182 ; *Speeches*, p. 501 ; *Hind Swaraj*, p. 60.

3. *Experiments*, II, pp. 53-4.

recede from truth. For in fighting the imagined enemy without, we neglect the enemy within.¹

Ahimsa is thus the practical application of the great truth of spiritual unity or, as Richard B. Gregg terms it, "the spiritual democracy" of all life. In the words of Gandhiji, "The basic principles on which the practice of non-violence rests is that what holds goods in respect of oneself equally applies to the whole universe."²

To Gandhiji *ahimsa* is the heart of all religion. The means and the end are one,³ so *ahimsa* is truth itself, its very soul, its maturest fruit. Truth and *ahimsa* are like two sides of a smooth unstamped metallic disc and are so intertwined that it is difficult to disentangle and separate them.⁴

Nevertheless *ahimsa* is the means, truth is the end. That is why Gandhiji is not so much the votary of *ahimsa* as he is of truth. He is capable of sacrificing *ahimsa* for the sake of truth but not the latter for anything whatsoever.⁵ "The jewel of non-violence," he writes, "was discovered during the search for and contemplation of truth."⁶ His experience convinces him that if he lets go his hold of truth he would never be able to solve the riddle of *ahimsa*.⁷ To him truth is the highest law, but *ahimsa* is the highest duty.⁸

Gandhiji lays more emphasis on truth than on *ahimsa* because he believes that truth (*satya*, i.e., essential being) exists beyond and unconditioned by space and time, but *ahimsa* exists only on the part of finite beings.⁹ *Ahimsa* divorced from truth would be demoralizing instead of liberating. In Gandhiji's words, "without truth there is no love ; without truth it may be affection as for one's country to the injury of others ; or infatuation, as of a young man for a

1. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 10.

2. *H.*, Nov. 12, 1938, p. 320.

3. *Y.I.*, III, p. 154 ; *Y.I.*, II, p. 936.

4. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 14.

5. *H.*, March 28, 1930, p. 49.

6. Gandhiji's foreword to *The Gandhian Way* by J. B. Kripalani.

7. *Experiments*, II, p. 476.

8. *H.*, March 28, 1930, p. 49.

9. R. B. Gregg's reference to a conversation of his with Gandhiji in his *Power of Non-violence*, p. 276.

girl ; or love may be unreasoning and blind, as of ignorant parents for their children.”¹

Like truth, *ahimsa* is also omnipotent, infinite and synonymous with God.² It is soul-force or the power of god-head within us. Just as the soul can exist independently of the physical body, similarly *ahimsa* also transcends time and space and can act independently of physical aids. It is the greatest and the most active force in the world, more positive than electricity, more powerful than ether, a force superior to all the forces put together, the only force in life.³

Like truth, again, it is a matter of faith and experience and not of argument beyond a point. It “is not so much a mental or intellectual attitude as a quality of the heart and soul.”⁴ A living faith in the God of love and in the existence of the soul as apart from the body is, therefore, indispensable for the successful use of non-violence.

Like Plato Gandhiji holds that the universe is governed by *ahimsa* or love, for life persists in the midst of destruction. He writes, “Though there is repulsion enough in Nature, she lives by attraction. Mutual love enables Nature to persist. Man does not live by destruction. Self-love compels regard for others.”⁵ “We all are bound by the tie of love. There is in everything a centripetal force without which nothing could have existed . . . even as there is cohesive force in blind matter, so must there be in all things animate and the name of that cohesive force among animate beings is love. . . . Where there is love there is life ; hatred leads to destruction.”⁶

1. *Speeches*, p. 503.

2. *H.*, May 1, 1937, p. 89.

3. *H.*, March 14, 1939, p. 39.

4. *Y.J.*, II, p. 1113.

5. *Y.J.*, I, p. 284.

6. *Y.J.*, I, p. 734.

Gandhiji differs from those Darwinians who swear by a ruthless struggle for existence as the determinant in evolution. But many distinguished scientists, e.g. A. N. Whitehead, Kropotkin, etc., lay stress on mutual aid and hold that progress depends on the preponderance of intra-specific co-operation over intra-specific competition. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, pp. 256-57. Prince Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*.

Ahimsa is thus an all pervasive eternal principle applicable to every situation in life without any exception. That is why Gandhiji insists, as a condition of complete success of non-violence, that when it is accepted as the law of life, it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts.¹ For, like Tolstoy, Gandhiji also believes that once we admit violence into *ahimsa* we admit the insufficiency of the latter and thus deny it as the law of moral life. Thus *ahimsa* is the only thing that matters. To Gandhiji it is the Kingdom of Heaven, and if we seek it first everything else shall be added unto us.² He writes, "For me . . . *Ahimsa* comes before *swaraj*. . . . *Ahimsa* must be placed before everything else while it is professed. Then alone it becomes irresistible."³ *Ahimsa* is, according to him, at the root of every one of his activities.

But what is *ahimsa* ?

The words '*ahimsa*' and 'non-violence' are seemingly negative in form on account of the negative prefixes 'a' and 'non' respectively. Gandhiji suggests the reason why this highest religion has been defined negatively. *Himsa* is an inherent necessity for life in the body. Life lives upon life. *Ahimsa* means an effort to abandon the violence that is inevitable in life.⁴ *Ahimsa* stands for the ultimate deliverance of man from the bondage of the flesh so that he may attain the state in which life is possible without the necessity of a perishable body whose sustenance inevitably involves destruction.

According to Gandhiji, the negative aspect of *ahimsa* consists in refraining from causing pain or killing any life out of anger or from selfish purpose or with the intention of injuring it. Thus "*Ahimsa* means avoiding injury to anything on earth in thought, word or deed."⁵

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1. *H.*, Sep. 5, 1936, p. 237.
 2. *H.*, March 14, 1936, p. 37.
 3. *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 174.
 4. *H.*, Sep. 1, 1940, p. 271.
 5. *H.*, Sep. 7, 1935, p. 234.

Ahimsa in its negative sense does not mean merely non-killing. Other and more insidious forms of *himsa*, Gandhiji points out, are harsh words and harsh judgments (i.e., those intended to hurt), ill-will, anger, spite, cruelty, the torture of men and animals, the starvation and exploitation, the wanton humiliation and oppression of the weak, the killing of their self-respect, etc.¹ Thus *Ahimsa* in the negative sense requires that we may not harbour an uncharitable thought even in connection with one who may consider himself to be our enemy.²

Gandhiji is, however, not a literalist in his conception of *ahimsa*. To him the essence of *himsa* is a violent intention behind a thought, word or deed, i.e., an intention to harm.³ Thus killing is not *himsa* when life is destroyed for the sake of those whose life is taken.⁴ The destruction of the bodies of tortured creatures helplessly suffering the pangs of a slow, certain death, is *ahimsa*. Gandhiji writes, "should my child be attacked by rabies and there was no helpful remedy to relieve his agony I would consider it my duty to take his life."⁵ As is well known, Gandhiji once had a calf in his Ashrama poisoned because its intense, unbearable agony was beyond remedy. Similarly, forcibly preventing a child from rushing towards the fire and smacking a child bitten by a

1. *V.I.*, III, p. 860.

Mr. Gregg defines violence thus : "Violence is any act, motive, thought active feeling, or outwardly directed attitude which is divisive in nature or result in respect to emotion or inner attitude ; that is to say, inconsistent with spiritual unity . . . It would include, for example, pride, scorn, contempt, anger, impatience, grumbling, spite, indignation, as well as killing, wounding, frightening, exploiting, deceiving, poisoning, tempting to evil, flattering, deliberate weakening of character and similar wrong." R. B. Gregg, *The Power of Non-violence*, p. 282.

2. *Speeches*, p. 320.

3. *H.*, Dec. 19, 1936, p. 362.

4. *V.I.*, II, p. 971.

5. *V.I.*, II, p. 978.

Gandhiji lays down four conditions the fulfilment of all of which can warrant the taking of life of an ailing individual from the point of view of *ahimsa*. These are :

(a) The disease should be incurable.

(b) All concerned should have despaired of the life of the patient.

(c) The case should be beyond all help or service.

(d) It should be impossible for the patient in question to express his or its wish. (See *V.I.*, III, p. 897.)

snake to keep it awake are instances of non-violence, provided the motive is not anger but the desire to save the child from injury.¹

Gandhiji describes another instance of non-violent killing thus :

“Suppose for instance, that I find my daughter—whose wish at the moment I have no means of ascertaining—is threatened with violation and there is no way by which I can save her, then it would be the purest form of *ahimsa* on my part to put an end to her life and to surrender myself to the fury of the incensed ruffian.”²

Ahimsa is often mistaken for a purely negative doctrine. Such, for example, is the opinion of Mr Bernard Shaw.³ To Gandhiji *ahimsa* is essentially a positive and dynamic force. In its positive and active aspect *ahimsa* means ‘love’ in more comprehensive than the Pauline sense, for *ahimsa* includes the whole creation and not merely human, though St. Paul’s definition is good enough for all practical purposes.⁴ *Ahimsa* thus also embraces sub-human life, not excluding plants or flowers, noxious insects or beasts. “Non-violence is therefore in its active form good will towards all life.”⁵ Refraining from *himsa* is only the form of *ahimsa*, love is its very soul. All the same Gandhiji does not identify *ahimsa* with love in order to distinguish this spiritual force from the grosser aspects of the connotation of love. The love that is *ahimsa* is not the mercenary affair which is based on the goodness of the object of love. It is the true love that is self-effacing and demands no consideration.⁶

Even tigers, snakes and other venomous beasts and reptiles have kinship with us and, being God’s creatures like us, have

1. *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 65-6 ; *H.*, Feb. 6, 1937, p. 414.

2. *Y.I.*, III, p. 859.

3. His opinion on Gandhiji quoted in R. F. Miller’s *Gandhi, the Holy Man*, pp. 160-162.

4. *H.*, March 14, 1936, p. 39.

5. *Y.I.*, II, p. 286.

6. *Y.I.*, II, p. 551.

as much right to live as we. True, we do not know what part the many so-called noxious creatures play in the economy of nature. But if we believe God to be good and wise, loving and merciful, He must not have created them for human destruction. Gandhiji believes that our habit of killing fellowmen on the slightest pretext has darkened our reason. We have not yet learnt how to live peacefully with these fellow creatures. We fear them and destroy them. But we have no right to destroy life that we cannot create, and the fullest development requires the largest love that sheds all fear and reaches out even to these creatures.¹

Ahimsa thus means the largest love, love even for the evil-doer. It however does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer. On the contrary it means putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Evil, Gandhiji holds, cannot be overcome by evil, by violence and retaliation. To use violence against the evil-doer is to deny spiritual unity with him. To repeat the mistake of the evil-doer, to fight evil with its own weapons, is like casting out Satan by Satan. It is to descend to the level of the evil-doer, to collaborate with him in propagating evil and thus to move in a vicious circle.

Non-violence, on the other hand, seeks to conquer evil by good. It stands for moral opposition to immorality, the resistance of soul against physical force. It goes to the very root of the problem. It believes in the ultimate possibility, the essential goodness of human nature and thus refuses to accept the evil-doer at his own valuation. The non-violent man seeks patiently, by conscious suffering and the force of love, to convert the evil-doer, i.e., to make him conscious of his spiritual kinship with the victim. The non-violent man continues to suffer till the evil-doer repents for his misdeeds.

Thus in its positive aspect *ahimsa* implies that subjectively the *ahimsaist* must develop internal strength by waging a victorious conflict against his own feeling of resentment which

1. *H.*, Jan. 9, 1937, p. 382 ; *Y.I.*, II, pp. 957-84.

might otherwise express itself in retaliation and hatred. The strength, which expresses itself in self-discipline and enlightened forgiveness, is not the strength of the body but of the soul and is open to the weakest in body. Objectively the *ahimsaist* must, after this self-conquest, advance to the moral and spiritual conquest of the evil-doer.

In short, "*ahimsa* consists in allowing others the maximum of convenience at the maximum of inconvenience to us."¹ Again, "every act of injury to a living creature and endorsement of such act by refraining from non-violent effort, whenever possible, to prevent it, is a breach of *ahimsa*."²

Absolute *ahimsa* means perfect freedom from *himsa*, i.e., freedom from ill-will, anger and hate, and an overflowing love for all. From the point of view of complete *ahimsa* all violence in whatever form must be eschewed. But such non-violence is a perfect state and is reached only when mind, body and speech are in perfect co-ordination.³ All *ahimsa* is a power and such absolute *ahimsa* is absolute power. But such absolute *ahimsa* is the attribute of God alone. It is not given to imperfect man to grasp the whole meaning of non-violence or to practise it in full, even as it is not possible to grasp Absolute Truth.

Man has his share of responsibility for violence committed in society. Gandhiji says, "because underlying *ahimsa* is the unity of all life, the error of one cannot but affect all, and hence man cannot be wholly free from *himsa*. So long as he continues to be a social being he cannot but participate in the *himsa* that the very existence of society involves."⁴

Besides, life is bound in a chain of destruction and *himsa* is an inherent necessity for the life of the body. So no one, while in the flesh, can be entirely free from *himsa*.⁵ Thus the

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 984.

2. *Y.I.*, III, p. 812.

3. *Y.I.*, Oct. I, 1931.

4. *Experiments*, II, p. 229.

5. *Y.I.*, II, p. 960 ; *Experiments*, II, p. 229.

very fact of his living, eating, drinking and moving about necessarily involves some destruction of life be it ever so minute. Man has to destroy some life not only for sustaining his own body but also for protecting those under his care.¹ This, is, however, inevitable *himsa* and it has been regarded by society as permissible.

Apart from *himsa* involved in eating, drinking, etc., Gandhiji gives in his writings some instances where *himsa* is unavoidable. Some of these are putting to death rabid dogs and stray dogs when the latter become a menace to society ; killing snakes, tigers, etc. in similar cases of emergency ; destroying plague-infected rats and fleas, mosquitoes etc.; frightening and violently driving away monkeys to save crops ; killing a murderer who is about to kill one's ward if the murderer cannot be prevented otherwise ; dealing violently with a mad-man running amuck, etc. But these are instances of "duty in distress" arising out of human imperfections. They are not exceptions that would disprove the validity of non-violence as the supreme law of life. The greater the man's progress towards perfection, the more would be his knowledge of non-violent ways of dealing with such situations, and the less the need to fall back on violent expedients.

If the votary of *ahimsa* is to remain true to his faith, the inevitable *himsa* that he has to commit must be spontaneous, must be the lowest minimum, must be rooted in compassion and must have discrimination, restraint and detachment at its back.² It must be committed after all remedies to avoid

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 971.

2. *Y.I.*, II, pp. 971 & 983.

Causing pain or killing may be :

(a) *ahimsa* when it is the result of calm and clear judgment and the intention is to benefit the victim and relieve his or its agony.

(b) Permissible *himsa* when it is resorted to for sustaining one's body or protecting one's wards ; and

(c) *Himsa* when life is taken out of anger, selfishness or ill-will.

Cf. The distinction made by G. H. C. MacGregor, in *The New Testament Basis of Pacifism*, between power which is capable of control in the interest of ethically approved ends or redemptive power and power which cannot be so controlled or unredemptive power. The surgeon's knife is an instance of the former and the force of war of the latter.

it are exhausted.

A reference to both intent and deed is necessary finally to decide whether a particular act or abstention can be classed as *ahimsa*. The intent has to be inferred from a bunch of correlated acts. But though the crucial test of *ahimsa*, it is not the sole test. "To kill any living being or thing save for his or its own interest is *himsa*, however noble the motive may otherwise be. And a man who harbours ill-will towards another is no less guilty of *himsa* because for fear of society or want of opportunity he is unable to translate his ill-will into action."¹

Ahimsa rules out all wanton *himsa* to the sub-human creation, e.g., hunting, vivisection, non-vegetarian diet, etc. Gandhiji considers vegetarianism as one of the priceless gifts of Hinduism and has struck to the principle even in the face of risk to health. Meat-eating, he thinks, clogs our moral and spiritual sensibilities and is unsuited to those who would curb their passions. He does not, however, attach unreasoning importance to food and discourages that narrow attitude which sums up religion in terms of diet.² He says, "*Ahimsa* is not a mere matter of dietetics, it transcends it. What a man eats or drinks matters little, it is the self-denial, the self-restraint behind it that matters."³ Thus cultivation of non-violence is not confined to vegetarians alone.

Similarly non-violence implies that one must engage in occupations that involve the least violence. The occupations that a non-violent man adopts should be fundamentally free from violence and should involve no exploitation of others. Occupations and industries based on body-labour minimise exploitation and are thus suitable for the satyagrahi. The work of butchers, hunting, war or war preparations are obviously ruled out.⁴

1. *Y.I.*, III, p. 883.

2. *Y.I.*, II, pp. 1184-85.

3. *Y.I.*, III, p. 821.

4. *H.*, Sep. 8, 1940, p. 272.

On the whole the freer a man is, consciously and deliberately, from *himsa*, the nearer he is to perfect *ahimsa*, i.e., to Absolute Truth or God.

But what is the use, it may be asked, of first exalting non-violence into an eternal principle and then admitting that it is not possible for man to practise it fully in every situation of life? Had we not better admit, as many pacifists do, that in certain hard marginal cases non-violence is inapplicable and violence works better? Gandhiji's answer to this line of criticism is that an ideal which can be fully realized must be a poor ideal indeed, for it leaves no scope for constant striving and ceaseless quest which are the basis of all spiritual progress.¹ It is dangerous, therefore, for man to drag down, in his weakness and imperfection, the ideal to the level of what is attainable. "It is much better for me," he insists, "to say I have not sufficient non-violence in me than to admit exceptions to an eternal principle. Moreover, my refusal to admit exceptions spurs me to perfect myself in the technique of non-violence."²

If absolute non-violence is not of this world and if each man is left to decide for himself as to what extent he can practise non-violence, the question arises: Where should one draw the line between non-violence and violence? Is the non-violence of the coward also superior to violence? ●

Gandhiji distinguishes between three levels of non-violence:

The highest of these is what he calls the enlightened non-violence of resourcefulness or the non-violence of the brave. It is the non-violence of one who adopts it not by painful necessity but by inner conviction based on moral considerations. This non-violence is not merely political but pervades every sphere of life. It is the non-violence without any mental reservation—the non-violence which does not calculate, which breaks to pieces but never bends. One adopts non-violence

1. *Y.I.*, III, p. 1940.

2. *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

as the law of life, not because it will serve the purpose, but because one has reached that level of moral development at which violence is intolerable. It is such non-violence that moves mountains, transforms life and flinches from nothing in its unshakable faith.

Next to this is the non-violence adopted as a measure of expediency and sound policy in some sphere of life. Gandhiji calls it the non-violence of the weak or the passive non-violence of the helpless ; for it is weakness rather than moral conviction which rules out the use of violence. If pursued, not as a cloak for cowardice, but honestly and scrupulously with real courage so long as it is accepted as a policy, it is capable of achieving results to a certain extent.¹ It is, however, not as effective as the thorough-going non-violence of the brave. Being based on expediency rather than on the belief in the infinite moral worth of the least among men, the non-violence of the weak can, when necessary, permit the use of violence, i.e., it can sanction the treatment of men as mere means.

Ahimsa of the first type is difficult to cultivate in groups which find it hard to rise to the moral excellence necessary for the practice of ahimsa as a creed. The Indian National Congress, for example, is still non-violent by expediency.

Non-violence presupposes the ability, though not the willingness, to strike. In fact Gandhiji lays down, as an axiom of non-violence, the principle that “man for man the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the non-violent person to inflict violence.” But the real strength behind such ability comes from fearlessness and an indomitable will and not from mere physical capacity.² Thus non-violence is the quality of the brave and strong and is impossible without fearlessness.³

The third type is the non-violence so called by mistake, the passive non-violence of the coward and the effeminate.

1. *Y.J.*, I, p. 265.

2. *Speeches*, p. 790 ; *Hind Swaraj*, p. 40 ; *Y.J.*, I, p. 260.

3. *Y.J.*, II, p. 1113.

Fear and love are contradictory terms. And so "cowardice and *ahimsa* do not go together any more than water and fire."¹ Cowardice flees from danger instead of facing it and is unmanly, unnatural and dishonourable. A coward is incapable of exhibiting the highest type of love. The non-violence of the coward is really violence in suspension or inactive violence.

When there is a choice between cowardice and violence, Gandhiji would advise violence. To him vengeance is any day superior to passive, effeminate and helpless submission. "... It is better to be violent if there is violence in our breasts than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence."² The coward has no faith in God and offends against truth when he feigns non-violence. On the other hand the violent man is courageous and true to his feelings. So "There is hope for a violent man to be some day non-violent, but there is none for a coward. I have therefore said more than once that if we do not know how to defend ourselves, our women and our places of worship by force of suffering, i.e., by non-violence, we must, if we are men, be at least able to defend all these by fighting."³

Ahimsta, being infinitely superior to violence, requires a higher kind of courage than violence does, the courage of dying without killing. To him also who has not this courage Gandhiji advises killing and being killed rather than shamefully fleeing from danger in the name of non-violence.

The world often mistakes violence for real strength and considers it indispensable for overcoming evil. This is partly due to the fact that non-violence being natural is not noted, while violence being an interruption of the course of nature is striking and is noticed. Quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of the force of love and nobody takes note of it. But if two brothers fall out and take up arms or go to law, which, according to

1. *H.*, Nov. 4, 1939, p. 331.

2. *H.*, Oct. 21, 1939, p. 310.

3. *J.I.*, III, pp. 222-3.

Gandhiji, is another form of the exhibition of brute force, their doings will be immediately noticed in the press, they would be the talk of their neighbours, and would probably go down to history.¹

Besides, the non-violent man depends on soul-force and has no outward weapon. Not only his speech but also his actions seem ineffective. On the other hand violence is a crude force and has its visible weapons and visible effect. The world is deceived by appearances and is hypnotized by violence.

In reality non-violence is by far the most active force in the world. It is self-acting and does not need physical force for its propagation.² Brute force is nothing as compared to it. Gandhiji compares the working of the two forces thus : "A man who wields sanguinary weapons and is intent upon destroying those whom he considers his enemies, does at least require some rest and has to lay down his arms for a while in every twenty-four hours. . . . Not so the votary of truth and non-violence, for the simple reason that they are not external weapons. They reside in the human breast and they are actively working their way whether you are awake or whether you are asleep; . . . The panoplied warrior of truth and non-violence is ever and incessantly active."³

Again, soul-force affects the adversary unconsciously and the unconscious effect is far greater than the conscious effect. To quote Gandhiji, "It (non-violence) is direct, ceaseless, but three-fourths invisible and only one-fourth visible. In its visibility it seems to be ineffective . . . but it is really intensely active and most effective in ultimate result. . . . A violent man's activity is most visible, while it lasts but it is always transitory. . . . Non-violence is the most invisible and the most effective."⁴

So strong is the force of love, a force open to the weakest in the body, that unaided it can defy the whole world in arms

1. *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 68-9.

2. *H.*, Nov. 12, 1938, p. 327.

3. *I.J.*, Dec. 21, 1931.

4. *H.*, March 20, 1937, pp. 41-42.

against it. It is this force in a frail mother that tames the brute and the bully in the erring, defiant, strong-bodied son. This love force is universal in its application.¹ Indeed, love works even in relation to animals. We have cases on record where men whose fearless love travelled beyond their kind approached tigers, lions, snakes, etc. as friends without being harmed.

Thus non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind, mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man.

There is nothing like failure in non-violence even as there is nothing like success in violence. For "Hatred ever kills, love never dies. . . . What is obtained by love is retained for all time. What is obtained by hatred becomes a burden in reality, for it increases hatred." Besides, "There is no time limit for the satyagrahi, nor is there a limit to his capacity for suffering. . . . The so-called defeat may be the dawn of victory. It may be the agony of birth. . . . The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering without anger and without malice."² Again, "Non-violence has no limits. If a particular dose does not seem to answer, more should be administered. It is a never-failing remedy."³

Non-violence, however, is not a cloistered virtue, confined only to the hermit and the cave-dweller. Being soul-force, it is capable of being practised equally by all, children, young men and women, and grown-up people, by individuals as well as groups. Even the masses can practise non-violence, "not with full knowledge of its implications, but because it is the law of our species."⁴

Truth and non-violence are no new ideals. They are eternal laws of life preached for thousands of years. But these ideals lacked that vitally, fullness of meaning and universality of application which they possess today. They

1. *Y.J.*, II, p. 868.

2. *Y.J.*, II, p. 846.

3. *H.*, Aug. 20, 1938. p. 226.

4. *H.*, Nov. 4, 1939, p. 331.

had come to be regarded as cloistered virtues, the almost exclusive preserve of the ascetic or else a mere mask for the weak and the coward. They were conceded as correct ideals but dismissed as being impracticable in the rough and tumble of life. Uncompromising truth, it was held, has no place in trade and commerce, professions like law and specially in politics. Similarly non-violence too was seldom regarded, even after the ministries of Buddha and Christ, as an adequate method of resolving all kinds of conflicts and of organising society and regulating individual and group relations. Its use was confined mostly to isolated individuals and small groups for minor purposes.

Gandhiji has restated and reinterpreted these fundamental laws in terms of modern life. He has experimented upon them on a larger scale than anyone else and applied them in his original way practically to every aspect of life. For applying them he has also created suitable organisations and trained experts. He has preached and demonstrated that these ideals are for the whole humanity to be practised in all situations of life. He has also demonstrated to a sceptical world that truth and non-violence are the mightiest weapons in the hands of man, the inexhaustible sources of power. Thus he has enriched the content of these ideals, breathed new life into them and made them dynamic.

CHAPTER IV

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES (*contd.*)

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SATYAGRAHI LEADER

Truth is the end and non-violence the way.

Non-violence is selfless, suffering love which is impossible without purity of mind and body. So the satyagrahi must equip himself by undergoing the purificatory discipline. *Brahmacharya* is the most important of the vows which Gandhiji prescribes as being essential for the development of non-violence. He regards this vow as important as Truth itself and is convinced that a leader of satyagraha must

attempt and virtually achieve *brahmacharya*.¹

In common parlance *brahmacharya* means control over sex-function. Gandhiji, however, takes this virtue in its most comprehensive sense. Etymologically *brahmacharya* means that conduct which puts one in touch with *Brahman*. This conduct consists in the fullest control over all the senses in thought, word and deed. An impure thought or anger is a breach of *brahmacharya*.² Thus *brahmacharya* means self-control in all directions.

Strictly speaking, *brahmacharya* rules out marriage, for the latter is not essential for self-realization. "Marriage is a 'fall' even as birth is a 'fall'".³

Gandhiji is conscious that absolute *brahmacharya* is the ideal state that imperfect man cannot fully realize. All the same the ideal after which we strive must be the correct ideal even as children are shown perfect shapes of letters and required to reproduce them as best they can.⁴ Gandhiji is, however, a practical idealist and draws a line between self-control and sublimation on the one hand and mere repression on the other, and without lowering the ideal he suggests gradual self-control to people of different moral grades.

Thus if progeny is wanted—and this is a natural desire—marriage is essential. But marriage should be an instrument of discipline and sublimation and not indulgence. The fundamental law of married state is that the sex act is justified only if it is confined to the sole purpose of procreation. But divorced from this deliberate purpose it is "a typical and gross form of dissipation and has therefore been specially and rightly chosen for condemnation."⁵ So confined the act is a fine and noble thing and nothing to be ashamed of.⁶ Gandhiji endorses the view of the Hindu *smritis* that married

1. H., July 23, 1938, p. 192. Gandhiji's letter published in *Sarvodaya* (Hindi), Oct. 1938, p. 35.

2. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 23 ; *Experiments*, I, pp. 485-9.

H., July 23, 1938, p. 192.

3. *Speeches*, p. 829.

4. Mahatma Gandhi, *Self-Restraint vs. Self-Indulgence*, 1, p. 75.

5. H., July 23, 1938, p. 192.

6. H., March 28, 1936, p. 53 ; and April 25, 1936, p. 84.

people who observe this fundamental law should be regarded as *brahmacharis*.¹ He calls it the ideal of married *brahmacharya* and, following the *Manusmriti*, considers one child as *dharma*j, born of righteousness, others being *kama*j, born of lust.

He is alive to the weakness and difficulties of the young and warns us against hypocrisy and mere outward suppression. Blessing two married couples in 1937, he remarked, "Don't be hypocrites, don't break your health in the vain effort of performing what may be impossible for you. Understand your limits and do only as much as you can. I have placed the ideal before you, the right angle. Try as best as you can to attain the right angle."² He writes "... marriage is the most natural and desirable state when one finds oneself even against his will living the married life in his daily thought."³ He believes that "it is harmful to suppress the body if the mind is at the same time allowed to go astray."⁴

For married people who want no children and seek to conquer the sex instinct, but fail to do so, Gandhiji concedes the "safe period method," as it involves an element of self-control.⁵

* Gandhiji gives us the reasons why the satyagrahi leader must virtually achieve *brahmacharya* or married *brahmacharya*. If the leader is an almost perfect *brahmachari* practically nothing would be impossible for him. For if the vitality responsible for the creation of life is husbanded, instead of being dissipated, it is transmuted into the creative energy of the highest order. Sublimation of passions strengthens the whole being of the individual, physical, mental and spiritual and gives him power unattainable by any other means. Complete *brahmacharya* means complete control over thought. "And since thought is the root of all speech and action, the quality of the latter corresponds to that of

1. *H.*, March 14, 1936, p. 36.

2. *H.*, April 24, 1937, p. 82

3. *Y.I.*, II, p. 1234.

4. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 20.

5. His conversation with Mrs Margaret Sanger reported by Mahadeo Desai in *Harijan*, Jan. 25, 1936. pp. 396-8.

the former. Hence perfectly controlled thought is itself the power of the highest potency and can become self-acting."¹ Again, "thought control means maximum of work with minimum of energy."² Moreover, the realization of truth and non-violence which means the realization of universal love through the service of mankind is impossible except for a *brahmachari*. One cannot live both after the flesh and the spirit. Indulgence tightens the bond of the flesh and is the negation of self-control, selflessness and non-attachment without which one cannot be a *satyagrahi*. *Brahmacharya*, even married *brahmacharya*, also saves the *satyagrahi* engaged in public service from the distractions of running a household.³

Gandhiji's emphasis on *brahmacharya*, perhaps more than any other principle of his, has been misunderstood and vehemently criticised. It has been said that contrary to the researches of modern Psychology and Medicine he advocates repression, that his ascetic principle has carried him too far, that the sex act is not a purely carnal act but is a means by which life is perpetuated and that, on the whole, his case is weak.⁴

But Gandhiji cannot be blamed for preaching repression. His writings abound in passages bearing ample evidence that he is not indifferent to the teaching of Modern Psychology

1. *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192.

2. *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 160.

Cf. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, "If a man remains absolutely continent for twelve years he achieves supreme power. A new nerve develops in him, called 'the nerve of intelligence.' He can remember everything and knows everything." Quoted in R. Rolland, *Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 277. As Romain Rolland points out, all the great mystics and the majority of great idealists have clearly realized what formidable power of concentrated soul, of accumulated creative energy, is generated by a renunciation of the organic and psychic expenditure of sexuality. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

3. *Experiments*, II, p. 148; *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 16-7.

Cf. "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife." *Corinthians*, VII, 32, 33.

4. Sir S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 18, 48, 105 & 191. *Aryan Path*, Sep. 1938, p. 452.

C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 101.

Speeches. See the introduction by C. F. Andrews.

Mr Spratt's article, *Gandhiji as a Psychologist* in *Indian Review*, July 1938.

and Medicine that it is dangerous and morbid merely to repress impulses to action. It is hardly necessary to add to three such passages quoted above.¹

As we have pointed out while dealing with his views on truth, he makes a distinction between those who evolve truth independently and those who merely accept and pursue it, between the leader and the follower, between one actively aspiring and working for moral perfection and the common run of humanity.² Of the former kind of men alone does Gandhiji demand virtual achievement of *brahmacharya*. So far as ordinary persons are concerned, he puts the correct ideal before them also, but he wants them to try to reach it to the best of their ability. To them he even concedes the "safe period method." But he considers the sex act as divorced from the purpose of procreation as an act of indulgence and makes a strong case against it when he says, "There can be no limit to the practice of an ideal. But unlimited sex indulgence, as everybody would admit, can only result in certain destruction of the individual or the race."³

But Gandhiji does not consider *brahmacharya* to be an impossible ideal. He refuses to set limits to the capacity of the human soul. He believes that the soul is one for all, and the positive reliable evidence of even one case of successful self-control is decisive. Thus if *brahmacharya* is possible for Gandhiji it is possible for any human being making the required effort.⁴ He points out that some of the highest among mankind in all climes have practised this high ideal.

Modern Psychology tells us that human instincts have undergone and are capable of undergoing immense alterations and sublimations and that sublimations are the way to individual and social progress. This only lends support to Gandhiji's point of view. The researches of the late Dr J. D. Unwin show that the cultural

1. See p. 74 above.

2. See p. 56 above.

3. *H.*, March 20, 1937, p. 44.

4. *H.*, May 30, 1938, p. 125.

condition of society rises in exact proportion as it imposes pre-nuptial and post-nuptial restrictions upon sexual opportunity.¹ But, as has been pointed out by Aldous Huxley, social energy and human entropy resulting from compulsory sex-control promise cultural refinement and not necessarily ethical refinement.² Gandhiji's ideal is, however, far superior to mere mechanical celibacy and is, therefore, not open to this objection.

Today when constant titillation of the senses is mistaken for good life and self-expression, when free love, trial marriages and easy divorces are the prevailing fashion, we require leaders like Gandhiji to remind us that sex is not the sole reality of man, and that self-realization is impossible without the conquest and sublimation of animal passions.

Of the various aids to *brahmacharya* Gandhiji has elevated the control of the palate to the rank of an independent observance. This vow means that we should be extremely simple in our food, eating not to please our palate but to keep the body going.³ For the purpose of rooting concupiscence out of mind, Gandhiji recommends dietetic restrictions and avoidance of courses suited to a life of pleasure. He also recommends fasting. But all this discipline is useful only when the mind co-operates with the body, i.e., when it develops a distate for the objects that are denied to the body.⁴ Gandhiji also recommends ceaseless effort in the form of prayer, for, according to him, perfection from error comes only through God's grace.

For the development of truth and non-violence fearlessness is indispensable.⁵ Fear lies at the root of untruth and

1. J. D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture*.

2. Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, p. 318.

Human entropy is the tendency towards increased refinement and accuracy.

3. *Experiments*, II, p. 161.

4. *Experiments*, I, p. 488.

5. There is available abundant evidence as a result of researches in modern Medicine, Biology, Physiology and Psychology that the divisive emotions, the chief of which are fear and anger, have become biologically inefficient due to social evolution. They were of great survival value in the past as they prepared the body, in face of danger, for immediate motor response in the form of flight or fight. Modern dangers can no longer be coped with by immediate motor responses. They require complex adjustments

violence. Cowardice is born of fear. In the words of Gandhiji, "Cowardice . . . is possibly the greatest violence, certainly far greater than bloodshed and the like that go under the name of violence. For it comes from want of faith in God and ignorance of His attributes."¹ Truth and non-violence can be cultivated only by the strong and "strength lies in absence of fear, not in the quantity of flesh and muscle we may have on our bodies."² Despotism subsists only on the foundation of frightfulness. Gandhiji lays very great stress on fearlessness, considers it to be the sign of self-purification and defines *swaraj* as the abandonment of fear.³

One of the objects of Gandhiji has been to instil into his countrymen self-confidence and to rid them of their fear and "oriental submissiveness." He has undoubtedly been successful in a large measure in training the nation to cultivate and practise the virtue of fearlessness. Viscount Samuel remarks, "He taught the Indian to straighten his back, to raise his eyes, to face circumstances with steady gaze."⁴

According to Gandhiji, "Fearlessness connotes freedom from all external fear,—fear of disease, bodily injury and death, of dispossession, of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation or giving offence, and so on."⁵

But how to become fearless? "All the fears revolve round the body as the centre and would therefore disappear as soon as one got rid of attachment for the body."⁶ To develop non-attachment we must conquer our passions, the internal foes of which one should be rightly afraid. Gandhiji emphasises the need of achieving the balanced state of mind or mental equipoise by means of control of passions. For the

of intellectual and moral nature. In addition to becoming biologically inefficient, these emotions have also become hygienically harmful, for they cause acidosis and predisposition to disease. R. B. Gregg discusses this change in his *Power of Non-violence*, Chapters IV and XI. See also W. B. Cannon, *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage*.

1. *Y.I.*, III, p. 976.

2. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 29.

3. *Speeches*, p. 824 ; *Y.I.*, Jan. 7, 1932.

4. Sir S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 295.

5. *Ycravda Mandir*, p. 43.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

sthūtaprajña, who has conquered himself, external fears cease of their own accord. But this state is possible to one who has had "a glimpse of the *atma* that transcends the body."¹ Such an individual would acquire capacity for sacrifice of the highest type. This is why Gandhiji believes that "That nation is great which sets its head upon death as its pillow. Those who defy death are free from all fear."² Gandhiji also lays stress on the need of prayer and of unflinching obedience to dictates of conscience, for the voice of conscience is the will of God and final judge of the rightness of every deed and every thought.³ Determined and constant endeavour and cultivation of self-confidence are also necessary.⁴

In *satya* and *ahimsa* are also implicit the vows of *asteya* (non-stealing) as well as *aparigraha* (non-possession) which follows logically from *asteya*. The two along with the vows of bread-labour and *swadeshi* determine the economic aspect of Gandhiji's philosophy.

Obviously one wedded to truth and universal love should not steal. But to Gandhiji non-stealing means much more than what it does in common parlance. Not only taking another person's belongings without his permission or knowledge and appropriating something in the belief that it is nobody's property, but also receiving something which one does not need, a father eating something secretly, keeping his children in the dark, improper multiplication of one's wants, coveting anybody's possession, bothering about things to be acquired in the future, plagiarism, etc.—all these are instances of physical or mental offences against the vow of non-stealing.⁵

1. *H.*, Sep. 1, 1940, p. 286.

2. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 73.

3. *Ethical Religion*, p. 41, Y.L., Jan. 7, 1932.

4. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 44.

As means of developing fearlessness Mr R. B. Gregg suggests daily regular meditation upon the unity of the human race and upon the enduring ideals and principles ; proper training of children in fearlessness ; and training in sports like riding, managing a boat, etc. which develop a courageous attitude of meeting dangers by skilful manipulative activity and thus transform much of fear into scientific interest. Richard B. Gregg, *The Power of Non-violence*, pp. 290-292.

5. *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 31-35.

bread. The body too is a possession and man should learn to use it for the purpose of service so long as it exists, so much so that service, and not bread, becomes the staff of life.¹ As applied to thoughts non-possession implies that the so-called knowledge which turns us away from the values of inner life, from the service of mankind, is ignorance pure and simple and should be eschewed.² Non-possession thus means non-dependence on material things. It implies total abolition of private property in all kinds of belongings, a view more radical than that of the extreme communists.

But absolute non-possession is an abstraction and is unattainable in its fulness. In the words of Gandhiji, "To possess nothing is, at first, not like taking your clothes off your body but like taking your flesh off your bones."³ "But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a scale of equality on earth than by any other method."⁴

Gandhiji admits that a certain degree of comfort, physical and cultural, is essential for the satyagrahi's moral and spiritual advancement. But the satisfaction of these needs must not go beyond a certain level, otherwise it will degenerate into physical and intellectual voluptuousness and hinder the satyagrahi in his service of humanity.⁵

1. *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 38-9. 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 40-4.

3. Quoted by Maude Royden in *Mahatma Gandhi*, edited by Sir S. Radhakrishnan, p. 56.

4. N. K. Bose's article *An Interview with Mahatma Gandhi* in *Modern Review*, Oct. 1935.

5. *H.*, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 226.

Individual possession is mostly absent in certain simple cultures. The Eskimos and the Arapesh, for example, hold almost everything in common. The Eskimos, it is said, are careless of possession to the point of contempt. "... material possessions hardly enter their scale of values" (C. de Poncis *Kabloona*). As R. D. Gillespie points out among cultures in which acquisitiveness is accentuated it is linked with the needs for power and security. Gillespie suggests that "by providing social security, by discouraging the cultivation of power impulses and

Gandhiji would dispossess every person of all his private property if this could be achieved by truthful and non-violent methods. So long as people are not prepared to give up possessions beyond their immediate needs, they should change their attitude and act not as proprietors but as trustees, utilising the property for the benefit of the community.¹

If non-possession, trusteeship and bread-labour were universally practised, they would lead to economic equality. Even their partial realization would lead to equitable distribution. Hence Gandhiji's remark, "My ideal is equal distribution, but so far as I can see it is not to be realized. I therefore work for equitable distribution."²

To bring about trusteeship Gandhiji would depend on persuasion and non-violent non-co-operation.³ If necessary he would also have the State equalise economic condition with the use of minimum coercion. He, however, distrusts the State and prefers voluntary non-violent action.⁴

The Indian socialists often demur to the conception of trusteeship of which, they think, the capitalists take advantage in relation to their workers. To Gandhiji, however, the theory is a necessary corollary of non-violence. He says, "My theory of 'trusteeship' is no makeshift, certainly no camouflage. I am confident that it will survive all other theories. It has the sanction of philosophy and religion behind it. That possessors of wealth have not acted up to the theory does not prove its falsity ; it proves the weakness of the wealthy. No other theory is compatible with non-violence."⁵

by shifting the basis of self-esteem from power and material appearances to solid worth in the sense of co-operation in the community, we should not be violating at any rate any strong inherent need, and might eliminate the socially artifactual need for possessions, and so remove one cause for the anxious reactions of the younger and the depressive reactions of older people." As foundations of the type of character which alone would make a better society possible he recommends, "Anonymity within community to which one belongs . . . the acquisition of skill and the development of gifts and abilities rather than material possessions ; co-operativeness rather than competitiveness ; realistic acceptance of the foundations of freedom which implies taking of risks for freedom's sake ; and the acceptance of self-sacrifice to the point of death if need be. . . ." *Psychological Effects of War on Citizen and Soldier*, Chapters III and VII, especially pp. 100 and 240.

1. *Yervada Mandir*, pp. 45-9. 2. *Y.I.*, III, p. 124. 3. *Y.I.*, Nov. 26, 1931.
4. N. K. Bose, cited above. 5. *H.*, Dec. 16, 1939, p. 376.

The conception of trusteeship seems to be implicit in the communist ideal also. In the classless society, when violence and profit-motive are eliminated, those incharge of productive and other activities of society will not be salaried civil servants, for the State itself will wither away. They will certainly need for their upkeep some money or its equivalent, and unless, in the management of activities entrusted to their charge, they are inspired by the ideal of selfless service and act as trustees, the very existence of the classless and stateless society will be endangered.¹

Gandhiji's critics also cavil at the ideal of poverty. But the vow of non-possession, it should be remembered, is the ideal of voluntary poverty, the poverty of divine meekness that is capable of inheriting the earth, the poverty that enriches, ennobles and elevates. It is not the involuntary, demoralizing poverty of destitution, the poverty of despair and inertia.² Gandhiji does not preach voluntary poverty to a people suffering from involuntary poverty. He realizes that the material condition of the Indian masses stands far below the economic minimum indispensable for morally efficient life. "They have never known the pain of plenty to appreciate the happiness of voluntary suffering, hunger or other bodily discomfort."³ The economic ruin and exploitation of the country under the British Government is one of the important causes of his determined hostility to it. The activities of the All India Village Industries and the All India Spinners' Associations are a concrete expression of his great concern for the economic reconstruction of India's rural life and the amelioration of her poverty-stricken masses.

Gandhiji's own long, dedicated life has been a model of non-possession. In spirit and letter he has relentlessly followed the vow, putting his body under severe ascetic discipline and reducing its needs to the narrowest limit.

Why does Gandhiji consider the conquest of man's acquisitive propensities as an essential discipline for the satyagrahi?

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1. *Gandhivad Samajvad* (Hindi), edited by Kaka Kalelkar, pp. 52-8.
 2. Vinoba, one of Gandhiji's well-known disciples, distinguishes clearly between the two kinds of poverty in a speech published in *Harijan*, May 16, 1936.
 3. Mahatma Gandhi, *The Wheel of Fortune* (1922), pp. 75-6.

This is due to his basic principles as well as practical considerations. The theory of non-possession is a corollary of his belief in soul-force. Soul-force transcends all material media, and spiritual progress, i.e., realization of spiritual unity, is not possible unless we crucify the flesh and simplify our wants.¹ Nature produces only what is needed for the moment and no more.² The principle of spiritual kinship demands that we must try to remove poverty and inequality with their attendant evils by possessing what is just enough for the present and take no thought for the morrow.³

Gandhiji also explains the ideal in terms of his religious beliefs. The Creator is the undisputed Master of all that we in our ignorance call our property. Man is such an insignificant atom that any idea of possession on his part seems ridiculous and offends against God's sovereignty. Nothing belongs to man, not even his body. As His creature it behoves man to renounce everything and lay it at His feet. This act of dedication, the expression of a determination to live a life of service to our fellow creatures, is the justification or the condition of the use of things to the extent necessary for such a life. The experience of saints and prophets who lived a life of voluntary poverty and contributed most to our heritage convinces us that this complete surrender to Him and an unshaken faith that our needs shall be supplied shall not go unrewarded.⁴ Possession of things which are not indispensable to us in the present is a sign of want of firm faith in the care and goodness of Providence.

His experience of the baneful psychological and moral effects of man's love of wealth further strengthens his convictions. Jesus' stern and well-known teaching on the subject of riches,⁵ he thinks, gives us an eternal rule of life. Like

1. *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 136-7; *Speeches*, p. 324; *II.*, Dec. 1938, p. 373.

2. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 36.

3. *Speeches*, pp. 287 and 324; *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 37.

4. Gandhiji's *Speeches* reported in *Harijan*, January 30, 1937.

5. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat." *Matthew*, X, 9-10. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God." *Matthew*, XIX, 24.

Jesus Gandhiji also believes that one cannot serve both God and Mammon. He realizes how possession creates attachments and tends to monopolise man's thought and action to the utter neglect and languishing of the soul. Thus the pursuit of truth becomes impossible. Much of violence in the world can be traced to disputes concerning possessions.

"It is my certain conviction based on experience," said Gandhiji to Dr Mott, the American evangelist, in 1936, "that money plays the least part in matters of spirit."¹ In another conversation with Dr Mott, summing up his views on the place of money in the life of the satyagrahi, he said, "... I have always felt that when a religious organization has more money than it requires, it is in peril of losing its faith in God and pinning its faith on money. You have simply to cease to depend on it ... The fact is, the moment financial stability is assured, spiritual bankruptcy is also assured."²

Gandhiji's conclusion is indisputable once we admit his premises, i.e., belief in soul-force, the greatest good of all as the ultimate end and the need of good means. If accepted, deliberate, voluntary poverty will keep us conscious of spiritual unity. It will make us fearless and leave us, due to simplification of life, ample time and energy for the pursuit of truth. It will revolutionize the economic structure and economic relations of society, eliminating competition and exploitation, war and imperialism and all those factors which at present restrict opportunities for the masses. For the satyagrahi leaders and to some extent for the followers voluntary poverty is indispensable, as it prepares them for the hardship of jail life and for loss or confiscation of property.

If we aim at the moral regeneration of society and not merely pleasures of the senses, we must evolve a better society the leaders of which will be inspired by the ideal of voluntary

1. *H.*, Dec. 26, 1936, p. 368.

2. *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 371.

This is how Mahadeo Desai sums up Gandhiji's views on non-possession, "You may have occasion to possess or use material things, but the secret of life lies in never missing them. Money will come for an object to which you are prepared to give up your life, but when there is no money you will not miss it, and the object will be carried on, perhaps, all the better for want of it." *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 371.

poverty and which will achieve a just distribution of reasonable comforts of life among the masses, avoiding the two extremes of luxury and abject poverty.

Closely related to the above vows is the vow of physical labour or bread-labour.¹ It is a corollary of the principle of non-stealing and a means of realizing non-possession.

The law of bread-labour means that man must earn his bread by labouring with his hands, by the sweat of his brow. 'Bread' is symbolic of the unavoidable primary necessities of life. These require productive labour and one who enjoys them without properly sharing in the labour is a thief. The so-called civilized but really depraved people who multiply wants and free themselves from manual labour really exploit the labour of the poor people, using the latter as mere means for their gratification.

Food is the first among these primary necessities. The ideal form of body-labour, therefore, should be related to agriculture. If that is not possible, body-labour should take the form of any other productive manual work connected with some primary need, e.g., spinning, weaving, carpentry, smithy, etc. Gandhiji's great love for the spinning-wheel is due to the fact that spinning, even more than agriculture, deserves to become the universal form of bread-labour. He writes, "A satyagrahi occupies himself in productive work. There is no easier and better productive work for millions than spinning."² Besides, "No other village craft has the capacity that spinning and its auxiliary processes have for putting so much money into the pockets of the largest number of villagers with minimum of capital outlay and organizational effort."³ Due to its association with the satyagraha movement, the spinning-wheel has also become the symbol of the efforts of the masses in India to cultivate non-violence.

Bread-labour, however, does not include intellectual labour. For "the need of the body must be supplied by the

1. The first person to coin the term 'bread-labour' was the Russian writer Bondariff. Later the idea was given wider publicity by Tolstoy and Ruskin, and Gandhiji is indebted to these two for the principle.

2. *H.*, Dec. 2, 1939, p. 360. 3. *H.*, Dec. 16, 1939, p. 376.

body. . . . Mere mental, that is, intellectual labour is for the soul. It is its own satisfaction. It should never demand payment."¹ Physical labour over and above that for earning bread as well as intellectual labour should be the labour of love done solely for the benefit of society.² The ideal will automatically lead to non-possession and eliminate large-scale production.

But bread-labour, which Gandhiji considers as the highest form of social service,³ should be voluntary and not compulsory. India's millions today undoubtedly obey the law of bread-labour for half the year. But they would shirk the law if they could. Theirs is a compulsory obedience, a drudgery that deadens their finer feelings and breeds poverty, disease and discontent.

It may be difficult to practise the ideal in its entirety. But even if without fulfilling the whole law people performed physical labour enough for their daily bread, society should go a long way towards the ideal.⁴ Those who earn more than necessary for their requirement must use the bulk of their greater earnings for the good of the community. In other words, over-possession should go with trusteeship.⁵ Absolute trusteeship also, as we have pointed out earlier in this chapter, may not be attainable. But striving for these ideals will bring, at least, equitable distribution of wealth.

The world will undoubtedly become happier, healthier and more peaceful if people deliberately take to bread-labour. The law can, in fact, transform conditions. Morally it will simplify life, facilitate the observance of non-violent values and "co-ordinate the vision of the inward eye with the work of the hands." Physically it will make men able-bodied and minimize disease. So far as intellectual development is concerned, educational psychology has for long recognized that

1. *H.*, June 29, 1935, p. 156.

2. *H.*, June 1, 1935, p. 125 ; June 29, 1935, p. 156.

3. *H.*, June 1, 1939, p. 125.

4. *H.*, June 29, 1935, p. 156.

5. *I.J.*, Nov. 26, 1931.

the use of hands profoundly helps mental growth. Economically too it will cure the modern world of many of its ills. It will bring about virtual self-sufficiency of the village and the country. It will be at once a levelling up and a levelling down, a remedy for the exploitation of the poor and the swelled head of the rich. Everybody will be his own master and class distinctions will disappear.¹

Swadeshi is another important vow and a key concept in Gandhiji's philosophy. *Swadeshi* means belonging to or made in one's own country. To Gandhiji it is "a religious discipline to be undergone in utter disregard of the physical discomfort it may cause to the individual."² He calls it the sacred law of our being and thinks that the law "is engrained in the basic nature of man."³

The object of *swadeshi* is not political but spiritual, i.e., to enable the individual to realize his spiritual unity with all life. As the body is a hindrance to the fullest realization of this unity and is not the natural or permanent abode of the soul, *swadeshi*, in its ultimate and spiritual sense, stands for the final emancipation of the soul from its earthly bondage.⁴ So long as this emancipation has not taken place the only way of realizing this unity is the service of God's creation. The law of *swadeshi* lays down the only correct method of serving it. This is how Gandhiji defines the law :

"*Swadeshi* is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote."⁵ "I must not serve my distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest."⁶

1. Non-violent values, particularly the ideals of bread-labour and non-possession, rule out large scale production and profit motive. We have discussed the question of large scale machine production in relation to non-violence in Chapters VIII and XI.

2. *Speeches*, p. 280.

3. *Speeches*, p. 325.

4. *Vcravda Mandir*, p. 89.

5. *Speeches*, p. 275.

6. *V.I.*, II, p. 664.

This seems to be the reason of the repeated assertion of Jesus that his mission was to the Jews and of his forbidding his disciples to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans and sending them "to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

Swadeshi is an all-sided patriotism of an exalted spiritual type. It implies that we must serve the country of our birth in preference to others and that, inside the country, we must serve the immediate neighbourhood in preference to remoter places. It also demands that we must hold fast to indigenous ideals and institutions. This does not mean a blind, unthinking attachment to the familiar institutions, but a discriminating regard for them with a readiness, where necessary, to reform, develop and borrow from others whatever is really healthy and beneficent. This, we think, is the only correct attitude towards all that is healthy and rational in the existing order. Any departure from this means sacrificing valuable constituents of our heritage, subjecting people to unnecessary strain and arousing discontent and opposition.

Gandhiji's insistence that the country and the neighbourhood have the first claim on our service should not be confused with narrow, aggressive nationalism which thrives on the ruin of others. Purity of service is of the very essence of *swadeshi*. Impurity of means defeats the spiritual objective of *swadeshi*. *Swadeshi* thus never countenances the advancing of illegitimate, narrow, selfish interests of groups and the neglect of the interest of the country or humanity. It only requires us to discharge our legitimate obligation to our neighbours and to prepare them to sacrifice themselves, when necessary, at the altar of national and universal service. To quote Gandhiji, "My patriotism is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive in the sense that in all humility I confine my attention to the land of my birth, but it is inclusive in the sense that my service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature,"¹ "I want India's rise so that the whole world may benefit. I do not want India to rise on the ruin of other nations."²

Gandhiji discusses the reason why *swadeshi*, which he calls "the acme of universal service"³, implies preference of the nearest and the immediate. Our capacity for service, he says, is limited by our knowledge of the world in which we live. So

1. *Speeches*, p. 281.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 664.

3. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 93.

we must, as our first duty, dedicate ourselves to the service of our immediate neighbours—the nearest and the best known to us.¹ Pure service of one's neighbour can never result in disservice to those who are remotely situated. On the other hand if one sets out to serve people in a distant place one is doubly guilty. He is guilty of culpable neglect of his neighbours who have a claim on his service. His attempt would also be an unintended disservice to the people of the distant place, for in his ignorance he would very likely disturb the atmosphere of the new place.² Besides, it is an arrogance to think of serving distant places when one is hardly able to serve even his immediate neighbours.³

Gandhiji believes that the teaching of the Gita—"It is better to die performing one's duty or *swadharma* but *paradharma* or another's duty is fraught with danger"—applies to *swadeshi* also, for *swadeshi* is *suadharma* applied to one's immediate environment.⁴

The *swadeshi* doctrine permeates the whole of Gandhiji's philosophy—his views on culture, his metaphysical and ethical ideas, his social and political theories, his views on education and his economic outlook.

In his views on culture the concept of *swadeshi* finds expression in Gandhiji's meticulous attachment to the rural civilization of India due to its unerring perception of spiritual and non-violent values. Gandhiji is not an indiscriminate despiser of everything Western,⁵ but he condemns in no uncertain terms the materialism and violence of modern civilization. He distrusts it because he thinks that in its race after power and pleasure it neglects the soul and its perfection. The tremendous development of the art of destruction and the

1. *H.*, Aug. 22, 1930, p. 217.

2. *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 89-91.

3. *Speeches*, p. 281.

4. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 91.

5. "... I am humble enough to admit, that there is much that we can profitably assimilate from the West. Wisdom is no monopoly of one continent or one race. My resistance to the Western civilization is really a resistance to its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation. . . ." *YJ*, III, p. 286.

horrors of industrialism—greed, competition and exploitation, war and imperialism—these hinder moral development and result in “spiritual hardening.” Those who believe, like Gandhiji, in the primacy of spirit can hardly question the correctness of his judgment that modern civilization is ‘ephemeral’ and ‘a civilization only in name.’¹

His metaphysical and ethical ideas are firmly rooted in the philosophical tradition of India. He has reinterpreted ancient Indian ideals and applied them to conditions of modern life.

The principle of *swadeshi* again explains his attitude towards religion. “As for religion, . . . I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion..that is, the use of immediate religious surrounding. If I find it defective I should serve it by purging it of its defects.”²

In the social and political sphere he believes in making use of indigenous institutions and curing them of their proved defects. Thus most of his satyagrahi weapons, non-co-operation, civil disobedience, fasting, picketing, etc. are the refined, modernised forms of ancient Indian modes of political and social protest. In the social sphere he upholds the *varna-shramadharma*, though not the caste system as it is in existence to-day.

In the sphere of education, ever since his South African days he has been insisting that education must be in keeping with national traditions and be imparted through the vernaculars.

In the economic sphere Gandhiji stands for the self-sufficiency of the country and even of villages except for such foreign things as are needed for the growth of the people.³

1. *Hind Swaraj*, Chapters VI & XIII. 2. *Speeches*, pp. 273-4.

3. Gandhiji's views on this aspect of *swadeshi* seem to have undergone an evolution. A study of his famous address on *swadeshi* delivered at the Missionary Conference, Madras (1916), shows that he then stood for complete self-sufficiency of the country and its economic isolation from the rest of the world. Referring to India's external trade he said, “If not an article of commerce had been brought from outside India, she should be today a land flowing with milk and honey . . . she can live for herself only if she produces and is helped to produce everything for her requirement within her own borders.” *Speeches*, p. 278.

To quote him, "The broad definition of *swadeshi* is the use of all home-made articles to the exclusion of foreign things, in so far as such use is necessary for the protection of home industry more specially those industries without which India will become pauperised."¹ "To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign, and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited would be criminal folly, and a negation of the *swadeshi* spirit."²

Thus he is not against all international trade, though he holds that imports should be limited to things which are necessary for our growth but which India cannot herself produce and exports to things of real benefit to foreigners.³

Swadeshi demands the exclusion of all foreign cloth. India can, as she once did, manufacture all the cloth of her requirement. Besides, in an agricultural country like India *khadi* is a universal subsidiary industry on which the semi-starved and semi-employed peasants can depend to eke out their scanty income. This is why Gandhiji considers *khadi* "a necessary and the most important corollary of the principle of *swadeshi*" and "the first indispensable step towards the discharge of *swadeshi dharma* towards society."⁴ But the economic aspect of *swadeshi* begins and does not end with *khadi*. *Swadeshi* implies a comprehensive preference of local manufacture and the boycott of all foreign cloth and articles which can be manufactured in one's own country, though not of all foreign goods.

India's adoption of *swadeshi* through *khadi* does not mean harming the British and other foreign mill-owners. They have sinned in destroying India's principal supplementary industry, upsetting her economic system and bringing poverty and starvation to her doors. The foreigners concerned would be the gainers in so far as they would be free from this vice.⁴

1. *V.I.*, II, p. 797.

2. *Ycravda Mandir*, pp. 96-97.

3. *V.I.*, II, p. 797..

4. *V.I.*, June 18, 1931.

Until 1931 Gandhiji distinguished between the economic aspect of *swadeshi* and the economic boycott of foreign goods. *Swadeshi* is a spiritual discipline, an invigorating and purifying process and a constructive programme. On the other hand, until 1931 he considered the economic boycott of foreign goods as a temporary punitive measure, a political weapon of expediency which works as undue influence exerted to secure one's purpose. It is resorted to, he held, in order to compel the opponent country by deliberately inflicting a loss on them and the spirit of punishment is a sign of weakness and a form of violence.¹

In the satyagraha movement of 1931-33, however, Gandhiji acquiesced in the Congress vigorously undertaking the boycott of British goods.² Recently in an interview with a Chinese he favoured the economic boycott of the aggressor nation.³ His views have obviously undergone a change. He now seems to hold that economic boycott need not be vindictive and violent and that it can be used as a legitimate non-violent, non-coercive means of non-co-operation.⁴

Gandhiji also recommends the vow regarding the removal of untouchability which follows from the principle of spiritual unity of all life. We are all sparks of the same fire, the children of the same God. He, therefore, asks of everyone to break down the barriers between man and man and between the various orders of being and to serve all life as one's own self.⁵

Gandhiji's views about social relations are determined by the law of *varna* which he calls true socialism and which was intimately connected with non-violence.⁶ By *varnashramadharma*, however, he does not mean the present day hideous distortion of the original *varnas* into countless castes with gradations of high and low and rigid restrictions on marital

1. *V.I.*, I, pp. 147 and 487-8.

2. See Ch. IX *infra*.

3. See Ch. XI *infra*.

4. See Ch. IX *infra*.

5. *Ycrarda Mandir*, p. 44.

6. See Ch. I, p. 6.

and social relations. *Varna* in its real meaning, Gandhiji thinks, is extinct today. In its ideal sense *varna* is not only for Hindus but for the whole humanity. Gandhiji defines the law of *varna* thus, "The law of *varna* means that everyone shall follow as a matter of *dharma*—duty—the hereditary calling of his forefathers in so far as it is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics. He will earn his livelihood by following that calling. He may not hoard riches, but devote the balance for the good of the people."¹ *Varna* is intimately, though not indissolubly, connected with birth. "*Varna* is determined by birth, but can be retained only by observing its obligations. One born of brahman parents will be called a brahman, but if his life fails to reveal the attributes of a brahman when he comes of age, he cannot be called a brahman. He will have fallen from brahmanhood. On the other hand, one who is born not a brahman but reveals in his conduct the attributes of a brahman will be regarded as a brahman, though he will himself disclaim the label."¹ The fulfilment of the law should be spontaneous and no matter of honour or shame. The law would mean equality of all callings and professions, all property being held in trust for the community.¹ The law of *varna* rules out untouchability.

Gandhiji is undoubtedly concerned with untouchability as it exists in India, but the principle is of wider application; for we find similar barriers erected everywhere in the world. The ill-treatment of Negroes, coloured races, primitive tribes, Jews, etc. is the symptom of the same disease, the denial of equality of all men irrespective of colour, creed, race or calling.

Gandhiji believes not only in the equality of men but also in the equality of the principal religions of the world. Equality of religions follows from the fact that truth as known to man is always relative and never absolute.

Even as soul is manifested in many bodies, so there is one true and perfect religion, but it becomes many as it passes through the human medium. Men being imperfect, all

1. *H.*, Sept. 28, 1934, p. 260-1.

religions are also imperfect revelations of truth and liable to error. Thus there is no religion that is absolutely perfect. All are equally imperfect or more or less perfect.¹ The question of the comparative merit of religions does not arise. A satyagrahi should, therefore, honour all religions and cultivate "equimindedness" towards them. He should be alive to defects of his faith. But as all religions are defective he must not leave his own.² On the other hand, he should try to remove its defects, adopting into it acceptable features of other faiths. Equal respect for religions, however, does not mean toleration of irreligion or being blind to the faults of other faiths.³

Humility is also essential for a satyagrahi or a seeker after truth. It is, however, not an observance by itself, for it cannot be directly cultivated. "To cultivate humility is tantamount to cultivating hypocrisy."⁴ If we are devoted to truth and fill our life with service, humility will come of itself.

Humility is a sense of moral and spiritual proportion whereby all men are related to the infinite and eternal God and thus assume their true place and relative position.⁵ It is the consciousness of spiritual unity and equality of all men, indeed of all life.⁶ It rules out love of power and position and makes the possessor realize that he is as nothing. Gandhiji writes, "I must reduce myself to zero. So long as one does not of his own free-will put himself last among his fellow creatures there is no salvation for him."⁷ A humble person is not himself conscious of his humility. Humility steers

1. *H.*, March 6, 1937, pp. 25-6.

2. Gandhiji is against putting any legal hindrance in the way of anybody preaching for the acceptance of his religion. *H.*, Jan. 13, 1940, p. 413.

3. *Yeravda Mandir*, Ch. X ; *H.*, Sept. 28, 1935, pp. 260-1.

4. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 67.

5. An article on *The Personality of Mahatma Gandhi* by R. B. Gregg in *Indian Review*, Feb. 1934, p. 84.

6. R. B. Gregg calls humility "a sort of spiritual equalitarianism." (*The Power of Non-violence*, p. 258).

7. *Experiments*, II, p. 593. On the basis of psychological and anthropological evidence R. D. Gillespie holds that it is possible to have a society in which power and position are not the main values and that disparagement of power impulses is accompanied by disparagement of property. *The Psychological Effects of War on Citizen and Soldier*, Ch. III.

clear of the complex of superiority as well as of inferiority, for both of these are signs of separateness and not unity. Nor does true humility mean inertia. "True Humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed to the service of humanity."¹

Humility is indispensable for a satyagrahi because to be lacking in humility is to separate oneself from the Universal Soul and to court weakness. Obviously such a person cannot properly practise the non-violent values. He is not non-violent, for he does not have equal regard for all. His egotism is a denial of the truth that all creatures are mere atoms in this universe. It is too much to expect of a person who is not humble to admit his mistakes. Nor can complete dependence upon God, so essential for a satyagrahi, be possible for a person who feels that he is something.

Nothing can be a source of greater strength than to shatter the chains of egotism and be humble and become one with the Universal Soul.

Unobtrusive humility is an asset of inestimable value to the satyagrahi leader during the course of non-violent resistance. He does not indulge in brag, bluff and bluster, but lets his work speak for itself and relies for strength on the correctness of his position. This wins supporters, converts the wavering and disarms the opponent. Humility is, in such a campaign, a key to quick success.

This is the ethical discipline that a satyagrahi must undergo. The discipline involves the control and sublimation of divisive appetites and emotions, particularly those of sex, acquisitiveness, pugnacity, fear and hatred. The discipline is, in the words of Mr Andrews, "a singular blending of different inward acts of conscience which issue in outward acts of observance."² The various observances being derived from truth are inter-related, and we cannot disregard any of them without hurting the rest. Thus they are essential parts of satyagraha itself.

1. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 69.

2. C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 111.

Non-violent direct action, with which satyagraha is popularly identified, is only the application of these values, specially truth and non-violence, to conflicts. Though every one has within him the divine spark and the potentiality to acquire this discipline, Gandhiji considers such discipline essential for the leaders only who seek to evolve truth by their own efforts. Discipline, of course, is expected even of a common volunteer, but not the high level of moral excellence required of the leader.¹

In his previous non-violent movements Gandhiji's emphasis, so far as the satyagrahi followers were concerned, was on external acts of observance and not so much on motive. Thus he wrote in 1921, "I confess that the motive of all non-co-operators is not love but a meaningless hatred . . . I call it meaningless for the hatred of non-co-operators has no meaning in the plan of non-co-operation. A man does not sacrifice himself out of hatred . . . what does it matter with what motive a man does the right thing?"² Even now he lays great stress on external observances specially spinning which he considers the test of non-violent discipline and the symbol of identification with the poorest. All the same his standard has gone up. Referring to the past campaigns he said in 1939, "I was not so rigid in my conditions then as I am now."³ He now insists that in regard to non-violence mere physical observance is not enough and that even the masses must not harbour in the mind ill-will or anger against the opponent.⁴ It does not matter, he thinks, if the belief of the masses in non-violence is unintelligent. Their faith in the leaders must be genuine. The belief of the leaders in non-violence must be intelligent and they must try live up to all the implications of the belief.⁵

But is this discipline practicable? Does not Gandhiji expect too much of human nature? Besides, is it the correct

1. *Y.I.*, I, pp. 34-6.

2. *Y.I.*, I, pp. 253-4.

3. *H.*, Dec. 2, 1939, p. 361.

4. See, for example, his article entitled *Causes* in *Harijan*, Oct. 28, 1939.

5. *H.*, Nov. 4, 1939, p. 332.

ideal ? Will it really lead to the greatest good of all ? And even if the ideal is sound, how to apply abstract principles to concrete situations of life ? We propose to deal with these questions in the next two chapters.

CHAPTER V

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND PRACTICABILITY OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

All political theories have a psychological basis, and the validity of Gandhiji's political philosophy depends partly on the soundness of his insight into the real nature of man.

His critics often point out that his philosophy expects the impossible from human nature. Instead of taking a realistic view, they say, he glorifies human nature and takes a very optimistic and roseate view of man and of his ability to achieve the good.¹

On the other hand, Gandhiji's claim is that he is not a visionary but a practical idealist and that he is "a fairly accurate student of human nature," having studied it in all its shades and casts.² His long experience as a satyagrahi leader, his intensive tours of India, his contact with large masses of men, the intimate correspondence that he has kept on for half a century with a large number of men of women in India and outside—all these have undoubtedly given him a profound grasp of psychology.

Gandhiji's views about human nature are bound up indissolubly with his metaphysical convictions and moral principles. He takes into account not only man's physical behaviour but also man's real nature, his true self, the spiritual element in him. He is not only concerned with human nature as it is, he also tells us how man can train and mould his nature so as to become what he is capable of becoming.

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1. Sir S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 191 ;
M. Ruthnaswamy, *The Political Philosophy of Mr. Gandhi*, p. 16.
 2. *Y.I.*, I, p. 635 ; *H.*, Feb. 2, 1934, p. 16 ; *Experiments*, II, p. 77.

Gandhiji does not believe that man is all good, an angel, at the beginning of his life. "Everyone of us is a mixture of good and evil. Is there not plenty of evil in us? There is enough in me . . . and I always pray to God to purge me of it. The difference that there is between human beings is the difference of degree."¹

He admits man's animal ancestry. "We were, perhaps, all originally brutes. I am prepared to believe that we have become men by a slow process of evolution from the brute."² Again, "Man must choose either of the two courses, the upward or the downward, but as he has the brute in him, he will more easily choose the downward course than the upward, especially when the downward course is presented to him in a beautiful garb . . . the downward instinct is embodied in them (men) . . ."³

Even the tallest trees do not touch heaven, and Gandhiji believes that even the greatest of men, so long as they are within the frame of the flesh, have their imperfections. "There is no one without faults, not even men of God. They are men of God not because they are faultless but because they know their own faults . . . and are ever ready to correct themselves."⁴ As for himself he has been loud and frequent in admitting the weaknesses which sometimes assail him in fine, subtle form. In his characteristic, humble strain he writes, "I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow beings wears and am, therefore, as liable to err as any."⁵

Social psychology has made us familiar with the idea that as a member of groups man sometimes behaves worse than when alone. With a sense of security and power which the numerical strength of his companions gives him, he loses his sense of responsibility, yields to the emotional appeal of the group and participates in activities which he would normally avoid. Gandhiji also places greater reliance on

1. *H.*, June 10, 1939, pp. 185-6.
2. *H.*, April 2, 1938, p. 65.
3. *H.*, Feb. 1, 1935, p. 410.
4. *H.*, Jan. 28, 1939, p. 446.
5. *Y.I.*, I, p. 996.

individuals than on groups.¹ The individual can be more amenable to reason and more alive to moral considerations than the group. Thus a satyagrahi group may not be as non-violent and truthful as individual satyagrahis, because the emphasis in group action tends to shift from inner purity to external conformity, and this tells on the potency of soul-force. That is one of the reasons why in 1933 when Gandhiji suspended mass civil disobedience he still permitted individual civil disobedience. In the satyagraha movement of 1940-41 also he avoided mass civil disobedience and confined himself to individual civil disobedience on large scale. Gandhiji does not distrust groups nor does he discount their capacity to practise mass satyagraha, but he lays great stress on the need of faith in non-violence, adequate discipline and efficient leadership.

Though he is duly conscious of the weakness of human nature in individual and collective life, he does not look upon man as a mere brute, naturally depraved. Sins and errors and abuse of freedom are not man's true self. Man is above all the soul, and so Gandhiji has unshakable faith in human nature. Even the most brutal of men can not disown the spiritual element in them, that is, their potentiality for goodness. What distinguishes man from the brute creation is the self-conscious impulse to realize the divinity inherent in him. To quote Gandhiji, "We were born with brute strength, but we were born in order to realise God who dwells in us. That indeed is the privilege of man and it distinguishes him from the brute creation."²

We have discussed in the second chapter Gandhiji's views on the nature of the soul and its limitless potentialities for progress. These views lead to some of his important conclusions about human nature. Thus he believes in the godliness, the inherent goodness of human nature. Godliness implies that it is more natural for man to be good than to be evil, though apparently descent may seem easier than ascent.³ It is his

1. *Y.I.*, I, p. 635.

2. *H.*, April 2, 1938, p. 65.

3. *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64 ; May 16, 1936, p. 109 ; and Sept. 7, 1935, p. 234.

firm faith that man is by nature going higher.¹ That in mankind moral qualities and social virtues, love, co-operation and the like, preponderate over violence, selfishness, etc. is proved by the fact that life exists amidst destruction.

Gandhiji also believes that human nature is in its essence one and that every man has the capacity for the highest possible development. To quote him, "The soul is one in all. Its possibilities are therefore the same for everyone."² "The ideals that regulate my life are presented for acceptance by mankind in general. I have arrived at them by gradual evolution . . . I have not the shadow of a doubt that any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith."³ "And I claim that what I practise is capable of being practised by all, because I am a very ordinary mortal open to the same temptations and liable to the same weaknesses as the least among us."⁴ Again, "I have been taught from my childhood, and I have tested the truth by experience, that primary virtues of mankind are possible of cultivation by the meanest of human species. It is this undoubted universal possibility that distinguishes the human from the rest of God's creation."⁵ Gandhiji's belief is supported by the opinion of modern psychologists that human nature has undergone and is capable of undergoing immense changes and sublimations.

He considers in detail human nature as it should be, i.e., the cardinal virtues which a man should develop in order to integrate his personality. This is the ethical discipline which we have discussed in the third and fourth chapters. The discipline means the control of our lower nature, especially the appetites of sex, acquisitiveness and pugnacity and emotions of fear and hatred. Positively it consists in the pursuit of truth through love of all, that is, service of all.

1. *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 254.

2. *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 254.

3. *Y.J.*, II, p. 204.

4. *Y.J.*, III, p. 517.

5. *H.*, May 16, 1936, p. 109.

Thus developing conscious non-violence is the path to perfection.

But though Gandhiji's ideal is not a psychological impossibility, is it practicable? Is it not too exacting to demand of man conduct of the highest ethical standard? Will the ideal appeal to the common run of humanity? Besides, can it be fully realized?

His ideal is no mere logical abstraction or academic theory. He is a man of action who never thinks of theories except in terms of practice. He never teaches anything that he has himself not practised in spirit and letter. He emphatically denies the charge that he is a mere visionary. He insists that his ideal is not for the chosen few but for the whole humanity to be practised in every aspect of daily life.

He does not expect the complete realisation of the ideal. He believes in the perfectibility, not the perfection, of human nature. Man, so long as he is in the flesh, can, at the most, approach the ideal, he can never fully realize it. "Let us be sure of our ideal. We shall ever fail to realize it, but should never cease to strive for it."¹ ". . . between the ideal and practice there must always be an unbridgable gulf. The ideal will cease to be one if it becomes possible to realize it."²

To him an ideal state is a perfect state, and "being necessarily limited by the bonds of the flesh, we can attain perfection only after the dissolution of the body."³ Besides, "where would be room for that constant striving, that ceaseless quest after the ideal that is the basis of all spiritual progress, if mortals could reach the perfect state while still in the body?"⁴ This is why Gandhiji emphasizes the means rather than the end, effort rather than its fulfilment. He believes in eternal striving.

Gandhiji also realizes how strenuous is the mental struggle, how intense the suffering involved in controlling and

1. *Speeches*, p. 301.

2. *H.*, Oct. 14, 1939, p. 303.

3. *H.*, April 17, 1937, p. 87.

4. *Y.I.*, III, p. 940.

changing one's nature, in erasing the almost indelible impressions with which one is born. He says ". . . it is not easy for all, at least for me, to efface the old *samskaras*."¹ He knows it is an uphill task, a difficult process to conquer evil in one's own life and to become truthful and non-violent. Thus in a conversation with Dr Thurman in 1936 Gandhiji remarked, "The expression (of non-violence) in one's own life presupposes great study, tremendous perseverance, and thorough cleansing of one's self of all the impurities. If for mastering the physical sciences you have to devote a whole life time, how many life times may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known? But why worry even if it means several life-times? For if this is the only permanent thing in life, if this is the only thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent."²

The task has been rendered specially difficult by the moral confusion created by modern civilization and its emphasis on wrong values, on physical pleasures, acquisitiveness, competition, and other self-regarding propensities.

He is duly conscious that his ethical discipline is a difficult ideal and that the lure of material advancement and the tantalising pleasures of the senses will, in the case of many, make it difficult to undergo the discipline. So he does not expect everybody to act on the ideal all at once. All the same he is not a pessimist. He asks us not to take fright or give up the effort in despair or degrade and cheapen the ideal and thus practise untruth and lower ourselves.³

He does not ask too much of us. He knows nature changes slowly by a gradual process through effort and pain. He only asks us to keep the right ideal before us, to have hope and faith, to understand our limitations and accordingly to try as best we can to approach the ideal. This, he believes, is the way of highest attainment. Thus he is not impatient. He allows ample time for slow steady growth. "If it takes

1. *Experiments*, II, p. 80, *Y.I.*, II, p. 1204.

2. *H.*, March 14, 1936, p. 1939.

3. *Ycravda Mandir*, p. 27.

time, then it is but a speck in the complete time cycle.”¹ Besides, moral progress made in this life will be available to us in the future according to the doctrine of rebirth. “. . . I believe in rebirth as much as I believe in the existence of my present body. I therefore know that even a little effort is not wasted.”² He also counts upon the infectious effect, on the masses, of the example set by the leaders. To quote from *Hind Swaraj*, “What a few may do, others will copy, and the movement will grow like the coconut of the mathematical problem. What the leaders do, the populace will gladly follow.”³ His emphasis is thus on correctness of direction and earnestness of endeavour.

The ideal of truth and love many scare away people today, but what really matters in the long run is the soundness of the ideal rather than the apparent impossibility of its being practised by people in general. Were not people similarly sceptic about the giving up of slavery, cannibalism and many other practices which seem so loathsome today? “Modern science is replete with illustrations of the seemingly impossible having become possible within living memory. But the victories of physical sciences would be nothing against the victory of the Science of Life, which is summed up in love which is the law of our being.”⁴

It is hardly necessary to add that Gandhiji is conscious of morbid and harmful effects of the forced repression of our nature. In the last chapter we have quoted passages from his writings to show that he discourages repression. His ethical discipline is essentially a process of sublimation and consists not only of inward acts of conscience but also of corresponding outward acts of observance. The vows of the control of palate, bread-labour, non-possession, etc. show the great importance Gandhiji attaches to action as indispensable to sublimation. He believes that “success is there for the indi-

1. *H.*, June 15, 1935, p. 138.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 1204.

3. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 86.

4. *H.*, Sept. 26, 1936.

vidual as soon as he has acted on the principles he holds.”¹ As useful aids to sublimation Gandhiji also recommends silence, prayer and fasting.²

To sum up, instead of confining himself to physical behaviour, a mere fringe of man's nature, Gandhiji takes into account man's real self, his essentially spiritual character. He tells us how man should mould his physical nature so that he may acquire mastery over it and realize the best in him. This requires that man should live not merely by habit but by self-direction, i.e., by effort of will. It is Gandhiji's firm conviction—a conviction born of faith in God—that human nature is not fixed and immutable and that every man has limitless possibilities for good life. The whole conception of satyagraha rests on the psychological assumption that the innate goodness of the most brutal opponent can be aroused by the pure suffering of a truthful man. Thus pursuit of truth, i.e., development of conscious non-violence, is neither impossible, nor even impracticable, though it is a difficult ideal requiring constant effort and eternal vigilance.

But though his ideal is not psychologically impossible nor even impracticable, it has been criticised by Tagore, and many others as puritanical, ascetic, negative, incomplete and unsound. Thus Gandhiji has been reproached for making life dull and boring by his inordinate emphasis on *tapasya* and *vairagya*. It has been said that he prescribes asceticism for its own sake and leaves no room for art and colour and thus deprives life of a good deal of its joy and significance. His ideal, it has been pointed out, means “refusing experience and shrinking from life.” The poet Yone Noguchi calls Gandhiji “A pilgrim along the endless road of hunger and sorrow.” One of his critics, who calls him “the high-priest of renunciation,” remarks, “Gandhi belongs to the type of Sanyasi who repress the flesh, consciously reject all the colour and warmth of life, denounce every thing which is not necessary for mere livelihood, hasten the dissolution of the body,

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1. Quoted by Mr P. Spratt in an article on Gandhiji in *Indian Review*, for July 1938, p. 449.
 2. For a brief discussion of these see Chapter VI.

so that the spirit imprisoned in it may the more quickly be united with the divine.”¹

Undoubtedly Gandhiji believes that the human body with its lust for power and pleasure is a hindrance to the highest flights of the soul.² He believes that suffering and renunciation, “the incessant crucifixion of the flesh,” are not incidental to life but its central facts, indispensable for moral and spiritual growth. Even during his student days in London renunciation appealed to him greatly as the highest form of duty.³ In his *Confession of Faith* he writes, “Increase of material comforts, it may be generally laid down, does not in any way whatsoever conduce to moral growth.”⁴ It is his firm conviction that “the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh.”⁵ “It is not possible to see God face to face unless you crucify the flesh. It is one thing to do what belongs to it as a temple of God, and it is another to deny it what belongs to it as to the body of flesh.”⁶ He holds that “After a certain stage the flesh diminishes in proportion to the growth of the soul.”⁷ Thus according to him, “Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone by the sufferer. The purer the suffering, the greater is the progress.”⁸

But why does Gandhiji consider suffering essential for spiritual growth? Spiritual freedom means capacity to love all, that is, to suffer for all. To rise to the highest reaches of the ideal of suffering love we must share the lot of the poorest and the lowliest. To that end we must limit our wants and

1. R. Fullop-Miller, *Gandhi, the Holy Man*, p. 157.
Sir S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 191, 202, 250.
Mr Spratt's article on Gandhiji in *Indian Review* for July 1938, p. 451.
Mr A. R. Wadia's article on *Mahatma Gandhi and Machines* in *Modern Review* for July 1931, p. 88.
2. *Y. I.*, II, p. 1935.
3. *Experiments*, I, p. 168.
4. *Speeches*, p. 770.
5. *Y.I.*, II, p. 107.
6. *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 373.
7. *Y.I.*, II, p. 1203.
8. *Y.I.*, I, p. 231.

discipline the flesh to serve the spirit. Says Gandhiji, "There is no limit whatsoever to the measure of the sacrifice that one may make in order to realize this oneness with all life, but certainly the immensity of the ideal sets a limit to your wants . . ."¹ Indulgence and multiplication of wants are ruled out "as these hamper one's growth to the ultimate identity with the universal self."¹

By renunciation, however, he does not mean that otherworldliness which stands for ignoring the demands of our present life and retiring into the forest. "To do no work is no renunciation. It is inertia."² He wants us to develop the spirit of renunciation which transmutes work into worship so that we may be able to love and serve. He wants us to live a dedicated life, to do everything in a sacrificial spirit, using all our abilities for service.³ Thus he reconciles renunciation and self-development with obligations of social and political life. It is hardly necessary to repeat that his ethical ideal implies a rational asceticism and not unnecessary, unhealthy repression. Thus he prescribes asceticism not for its own sake but as an indispensable means to realize the highest ideal known to man—the ideal of love that is service.

Nor do suffering and renunciation, when undertaken in the right spirit, frustrate our life and make it dark, dreary and joyless. Gandhiji has lived up to what he has been preaching. Is he not one of the happiest and most enlightened of men of all times? Those who have been closely studying the non-violent movement in India have noticed that in the case of a number of satyagrahis suffering cheerfully borne has had a definitely elevating, some times even transforming, effect.

Joy, as Gandhiji points out, has no independent existence ; it depends on our attitude to life ; it is a matter of national

1. *H.*, Dec. 26, 1936, p. 365.

2. *H.*, April 20, 1935, p. 75.

3. *Ycravda Mandir*, pp. 82-5.

and individual education.¹ In the midst of the moral confusion created by modern civilization he asks us not to forget the distinction made by the seers of ancient India between *preyas* and *shreyas*,² between a life of pleasures and the real happiness of life. The source of real happiness is humility and self-sacrifice rather than self-assertion ; regulation and restrictions of wants rather than their indefinite multiplication. Real happiness is the fruit of a balanced, purposeful, disciplined life, of sharing the sorrows and bearing the burdens of others. From a distance the discipline may look difficult and scaring, but when one actually undergoes it and sheds all thought of self, one finds that, far from being oppressive and cheerless, the discipline is liberating and the burden light.

Nor does his ethical ideal exclude art, though he differs from the commonly accepted views on aesthetic appreciation.³ Human art, he believes, is rather petty and inadequate as compared with the eternal symbols of beauty in nature, the panoramic scenes of starry heavens, the wonders of the sun-set, the beauty of the crescent moon—the beauties that remind us of the greatest truth, the Creator. So far as works of human art are concerned, Gandhiji values them by their moral content and their utility as an aid to self-realization rather than by the beauty of their outward form. Whatever embodies truth, whatever expresses or assists the upward urge, the divine unrest of the soul, is true art. Thus he values music not for the so-called artistic appreciation but as an aid to prayer and moral development. He believes that man's moral purity expressing itself through right action is a higher expression of art than the external forms like pictures, songs, etc. “A life of sacrifice is the pinnacle of art.”⁴

1. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 85.

2. For this distinction see *Kathopanishad*, Book II.

3. For this paragraph the references are : *Y.I.*, II, pp. 1025-36 ; and R. Fullop-Miller, *Gandhi, The Holy Man*, pp. 60-4.

4. *Yeravda Mandir*, p. 85.

Gandhiji concedes that artists may be able to see truth in and through beauty, but he thinks in terms of millions who must be shown truth first and will see beauty afterwards.

It has also been pointed out that "Gandhiji lays all stress on character and attaches little importance to intellectual training and development,"¹ and that character without intelligence is not worth much. Gandhiji no doubt believes that intellect without character is dangerous. The tremendous development of the art of destruction shows how man can misuse his intelligence to his own undoing. But Gandhiji lays due stress on the importance of intellect in the pursuit of non-violence. He holds that belief in non-violence, specially in the case of leaders, should be intelligent and creative. "If intellect plays a large part in the field of violence, I hold that it plays a larger part in the field of non-violence."² Again, "... true practice of *ahimsa* means also in one who practises it the keenest intelligence and wide-awake conscience."³ He, however, places first things first and believes that the conscious cultivation of non-violence must bring about the intellectual development of the satyagrahi. Thus referring to *harijan* service he wrote in 1936, "... possession of a pure character combined with love of such service will assuredly develop or provide the requisite intellectual and administrative capacity."⁴

This rigorous discipline involving suffering and sacrifice is an essential qualification for a satyagrahi leader. It brings about the refinement of his moral sensibilities. Besides, satyagraha always involves a good deal of suffering in the form of imprisonment, physical hardship, beating, torture and even death. This requires that satyagrahis should so train themselves that their bodies might be proof against any injury that might be inflicted on them by tyrants seeking to impose their will on them. The satyagrahi leader cannot expect to inculcate in his followers the ideals of service and sacrifice unless he makes his own life an object lesson.

The ideal of both Gandhiji and socialists is non-violent democracy. The essential pre-requisite of such a society is

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1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, p. 509.
 2. *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 210.
 3. *H.*, Sept. 8, 1940, p. 274.
 4. *H.*, Nov. 7, 1936, p. 308.

the refinement of the average man's nature so that he can respond adequately, without any coercion, to the demands of social service. But for this uplift of the common man we need, above all, the living witness of leaders and guides who are, as it were, the incarnations of the ideals of love and self-sacrifice. Those who live a life of indulgence and, instead of taking upon themselves the suffering of others, use violence, i.e., impose suffering upon others, cannot leaven society to the non-violent stage.

Gandhiji's system of non-violent values does not, as is some times wrongly believed, make life primitive. In his own words, "... it is not an attempt to go back to the ignorant, dark ages. But it is an attempt to see beauty in voluntary simplicity, poverty and slowness."¹ Complex, centralised political and economic life, which multiplies chances of exploitation, means sacrifice of non-violent values. The non-violent life, i.e., the life of service, he holds, must of necessity be simple, self-supporting and lived close to the soil. This implies a rural civilization of decentralised satyagrahi communities and a new conscious life, simple and free and rich in opportunities.

The one way to advance towards such a society is the cultivation of non-violence by the masses under the guidance of satyagrahi leaders.

CHAPTER VI

THE DECISION - PROCESS OF THE SATYAGRAHI LEADER

The satyagrahi leader seeks truth through non-violent means. To him the cardinal ethical maxim is that what conflicts with truth and *ahimsa* should be eschewed. Difficulties

1. *H.*, Oct. 14, 1939, p. 307.

arise when he proceeds to apply this maxim to concrete situations of life and to determine what is in conflict with truth and *ahimsa*. There is some times an inner conflict between one duty and another. How should the satyagrahi faced with the inner turmoil determine the path of duty? What should serve as his ultimate moral guide? Should he be guided by public opinion, or should he depend on himself? In the latter case should he be guided by reason or by intuition and conscience?

Gandhiji's life and the *obiter dicta* scattered through his writings give us his views on the problem. Gandhiji attaches due importance to public opinion in a democracy. He believes that the satyagrahi should yield to public opinion in matters which do not involve departure from his personal religion or moral code.¹ But for ultimate moral guidance in matters of first rate importance, the satyagrahi, who has undergone ethical discipline, must depend for true guidance on counsel from within. He must be a law unto himself. His soul is the seat of moral authority. His conscience, the voice of God, is the final judge of the rightness of every deed and thought.²

Usually reason plays a subordinate role in our decisions. In the words of Gandhiji, "... Ultimately one is guided not by the intellect but by the heart. The heart accepts the conclusion for which the intellect subsequently finds the reasoning. Argument follows conviction. Man finds reason in support of whatever he does or wants to do."³ Thus reason is in actual life the hand-maid of emotion. Gandhiji, however, attaches due importance to reason. He holds that "On matters which can be reasoned out that which conflicts with reason must be rejected."⁴ All the same he rejects the claim of reason to omnipotence. According to him there are things where reason cannot take us far and we have to depend on faith. By faith, as pointed out earlier, Gandhiji seems to mean the same thing as intuition.⁵

1. *Y.I.*, I, pp. 207-8.

2. *Ethical Religion*, p. 41.

3. *Y.I.*, II, p. 934.

4. *H.*, March 6, 1937, p. 26.

5. See p. 42 *supra*.

Spiritual Reality, as we have discussed in chapter II, can be apprehended by intuition and not by unaided reason. Similarly for moral guidance the satyagrahi may depend upon reason so far as it can take him. But the satyagrahi deals with soul-force, and in regard to his profound judgments faith and intuition, and not reason, must be his mainstay.

All the famous decisions of Gandhiji, e.g., the Bardoli decision in 1922, the one concerning salt satyagraha in 1930, the decision to start the movement of 1940-41, have been intuitive judgments. Concerning the last decision he says, "It has not come from my intellect. It has come from recesses of the heart where dwelleth the Innermost. It is He who has given it."¹

Though reason cannot usurp the place of intuition, it may help the satyagrahi to communicate to others the truth he has intuitively apprehended. It may also help him as well as others to scrutinize the rationality of the judgment.

But imperfect man, even though morally disciplined, cannot know truth in its fulness. He cannot, therefore, claim to have infallible guidance.² What he mistakes for inspiration may be delusion, his intuition may be blind, his reason may miscarry. His emotions, his hopes and desires may, once in a while, vitiate his judgment. Why not, then, depend, even in regard to vital matters, on public opinion, the collective wisdom of the community?

Gandhiji gives us the reason why the satyagrahi who lives for the moral regeneration of society must be guided by his own inner judgment rather than by external demands of public opinion which may concern itself with conventional propriety : ". . . man is a self-governing being and self-government necessarily includes as much power to commit errors as to set them aright as often as they are made."³ So "True morality

1. *H.*, Sept. 22 1940, p. 289.

2. *Y.J.*, II, p. 79; *Y.J.*, III, p. 154.

3. *Y.J.*, III, p. 154.

consists not in following the beaten path but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it.”¹

Besides, “. . . often one learns to recognise wrong only through unconscious error. On the other hand if a man fails to follow the light within for fear of public opinion or any other similar reason he would never be able to know right from wrong and in the end lose all sense of distinction between the two. . . . The path way of *Ahimsa* . . . one has often to tread all alone.”²

Thus the satyagrahi leader must refuse to be led by the masses in vital matters, otherwise he will drift like an anchorless ship. Says Gandhiji, “I believe that mere protestation of one’s opinion and surrender to mass opinion is not only not enough, but in matters of vital importance, leaders must act contrary to the mass opinion if it does not commend itself to their reason.”³

This, however, does not mean undemocratic leadership or blind worship of authority. Gandhiji is conscious that unrestrained power corrupts. He writes, “I detest autocracy. Valuing my freedom and independence, I equally cherish them for others. I have no desire to carry a single soul with me, if I cannot appeal to his or her reason.”⁴

To him the moral autonomy of the individual also implies the moral autonomy of the group. Gandhiji’s own life illustrates the principle. His inner voice, the intuitive insight of one of the noblest souls of all times, has been his “mentor and monitor” since the early age of fifteen, revealing to him his path from day to day. In his long career as satyagrahi leader, though he has often yielded to public opinion in non-vital matters, in regard to his cardinal principles he has always been against a compromise. At the same time he believes that groups have as much right to experiment with

1. *Ethical Religion*, p. 38.
2. *Y.I.*, III, p. 858.
3. *Y.I.*, I, p. 209.
4. *Y.I.*, I, p. 208.

truth and to err as the individual.¹

Thus Gandhiji's ideal rules out a weak, cringing, opportunist leader who pawns his conscience to retain his leadership and follows instead of leading. In case of conflict between his basic principles and the opinion of his followers, the clear duty of the satyagrahi leader is to be true to the dictates of his conscience and to leave the group free to determine its own path.

So far as loyalty of the followers is concerned, Gandhiji is far in advance of the democratic practice as prevalent in the West. He is against the leader being followed blindly out of love and demands obedience based on deep conviction.² That is why in 1934, when he felt that the Congress intelligentsia, though loyal and devoted to him, did not see eye to eye with him on vital principles, he withdrew from the Congress so that he might not act as a dead weight upon the organization, preventing its natural growth and the free play of reason among its members.³

Again, according to Gandhiji, the satyagrahi leader, even though he has the backing of a clear majority, should not disregard any strongly felt opinion of a minority ; for such disregard based on mere numerical strength savours of violence.⁴

The principle of leadership in authoritarian States is a striking contrast to Gandhiji's ideal. The authoritarian principle is, "arbitrary authority from the top down and unlimited obedience and responsibility from the bottom up." The modern militarist dictator is *par excellence* the propagandist leader. Instead of seeking his mandate from the sober, rational judgment of his people, he depends on the coercion

1. This is how Dr Gilbert Murray describes the non-violent character of Gandhiji's leadership, "... he utters no dogma, no command, only an appeal, he calls to our spirits, he shows what he holds to be truth, but does not exclude or condemn those who seek the light in some other way." Sir S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 197-8.

2. *Speeches*, p. 608.

3. See his statement, dated Sept. 17, 1934, reproduced in *History of the Congress*, pp. 922-32.

4. *Y.I.*, II, p. 212.

of dissentient elements and a constant appeal to common fears and common hatreds.

When a satyagrahi group engages in non-violent resistance the leader has to be invested with dictatorial authority, the internal democracy of the group has to be modified and a member's right to private judgment comes under restrictions. The members of a satyagrahi group may accept or reject the leader and his plan of action as a whole. But the acceptance should be without any mental reservation and the followers should have the fullest faith in the judgment of the general. His word is law and his followers should render implicit obedience to his commands. Tennyson's lines, "Theirs not to reason why . . . Theirs but to do and die", apply to a *satyagrahi* army also.

Both in *satyagraha* and military warfare the position of the soldier in relation to the leader is very nearly the same : he "may not remain a unit in his regiment and have the option of doing or not doing things he is asked to do."¹ This is compulsion, no doubt, but it is not superimposed by the leader upon the *satyagrahi* soldier against the latter's will or with the object of humiliating him and robbing him of his dignity as man. This compulsion is self-restraint because the *satyagrahi* voluntarily comes under discipline due to his own inner urge, and he is, unlike the soldier in the army, free to desert the moment he likes.

In addition to the consideration that discipline is indispensable in group action, Gandhiji gives another reason why the decisions of the leader of a *satyagrahi* fighting group should not be under democratic control. With many *satyagrahi* soldiers non-violence may be a matter of expediency and policy rather than of faith. They have, therefore, a choice before them and may be tempted to fall back upon violence.² This is not so with the *satyagrahi* leader who is non-violent "not out of painful necessity and weakness but out of choice and moral strength."

1. *Y I*, II, p. 1191.

2. *Y.I.*, Feb. 2, 1930.

The satyagrahi leader, however, should not unnecessarily strain the loyalty of his followers. He should try to convince them and to carry their heart and reason with him. But when no conviction comes, the followers must fall back on faith.¹

But to be guided aright by his intuition and to be able to determine truth independently the satyagrahi leader must acquire that purity which is, in Gandhiji's words, "the ripe fruit of strictest discipline." For the satyagrahi to be a law unto himself the invariable condition is that "he must then walk in fear of God and therefore continuously keep on purifying his heart."²

We have already discussed in detail the purificatory discipline which Gandhiji prescribes. This discipline integrates the life of the satyagrahi so that his *ahimsa* becomes dynamic and compelling and his intuitions become sure. He is able to have higher experiences and to apprehend the working of the soul-force.

Gandhiji also recommends silence, prayer and fasting as powerful factors in spiritual evolution and as invaluable aids to discerning truth.

Silence can enable the seeker to surmount a natural weakness of men, that is, proneness to exaggerate, to suppress or modify truth. The time of silence, moreover, is the time when he can hold communion with God.³

Fasting and prayer help us to attain the supremacy of the spirit over the flesh and clarify our vision. But they must not be mere mechanical contrivances adopted for stage effect. "The prayer is not vain repetition, nor fasting mere starvation of the body. Prayer has to come from the heart which knows God by faith and fasting is abstinence from evil or injurious thought, activity or food."⁴ "A heart-felt prayer . . . is a yearning from within which expresses itself in every

1. *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 158.

2. *Y.I.*, III, p. 154.

3. *H.*, Dec. 10, 1938, p. 373 ; *Experiments*, I, p. 153.

4. *H.*, April 10, 1937, p. 63.

*Gandhiji's own life is a unique record of research in the possibilities of prayer and fasting. He is an expert in fasting which is a part of his being and which, he says, he has to the best of his light reduced to a science.*³ As for prayer, he calls it his greatest weapon.⁴ There is not a moment when he does not feel the presence of a witness whose eye misses nothing. No act of his is done without prayer. He has never found God wanting in response ; he finds him nearest at hand when the horizon seems darkest. When taking important decisions, he hears correctly and clearly "the still small voice within." This inner call is the voice of God. Once it has spoken Gandhiji renders ready obedience, and for him there is no drawing back from the path ordained.

He has so attuned himself that he feels even his ordinary activities are the expression of the prompting of the spirit.⁵ Indeed Gandhiji is a mystic spying, as it were, upon the twilight movements of the spirit⁶ He does not get a full view of the Divine—who does ?—but the glimpses he succeeds in catching integrate his outlook and entitle him to be ranked

1. *Y.I.*, III, pp. 976-7.

2. His statement dated Oct. 23, 1944.

3. His statement dated Sept. 21, 1932, *History of the Congress*, p. 923 ; *Y.I.*, II, p. 123.

4. *H.*, Dec. 9, 1939, p. 371.

5. *Experiments*, II, pp. 61-2.

6. Gandhiji believes that the pre-condition for receiving higher inspiration is that "there must be a great crisis of the soul when you are literally racked by 'mental anguish and torture.' In that crisis the soul of the individual either soars higher towards the infinite Soul ; or else, unable to bear the terrible strain, falls back and finds rest in a closer association with the physical body. In the first alternative the voice of Truth is heard ; in the other, the individual gets identified with the world of matter, and shapes his conduct accordingly." Krishna Das, *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. I, pp. 400-1. Concerning the intuitive decision about the satyagraha movement of 1940-41 also he said, "It was born at the end of infinite travail." *H.*, Sept. 22, 1940, p. 289.

with the greatest of all ages.

To sum up, Gandhiji's views on moral guidance give us the ideal of democratic leadership. He is not oblivious of the degenerating influence of unrestrained power. That is why he imposes on the satyagrahi leader a two-fold check—internal as well as external. He insists on a moral and spiritual cleansing, a self-discipline which gives the leader a sense of moral proportion and equips him for the fearless pursuit of truth and the exercise of the mightiest of weapons, i.e., soul-force. He also advocates rational obedience based on the private judgment and the free conscience of the citizen. If the world is to be saved from the triumph of authority over liberty and justice, if peace and democracy are to prevail, leaders of unquestioned integrity and a courageous, vigilant civic sense in the masses are indispensable.

CHAPTER VII

SATYAGRAHA AS THE WAY OF LIFE

The purificatory discipline discussed above aims at equipping the individual for the practice of satyagraha.

The term 'Satyagraha' was coined by Gandhiji to express the nature of the non-violent direct action of the Indians in South Africa against the Government there. He was specially anxious to distinguish clearly this group action from passive resistance.

In common parlance satyagraha is interpreted as non-violent direct action ; but non-co-operation, civil disobedience, fasting and other forms of non-violent direct action do not exhaust the content of satyagraha. The literal meaning of satyagraha is "holding on to truth" or "insistence on truth." Spiritual unity is the highest truth and the only way to realize it is to be non-violent, i.e., to love all and suffer for all. That is why Gandhiji identifies satyagraha with "love force" or "soul-force." Thus satyagraha is the relentless

pursuit of truthful ends by non-violent means. It is the "vindication of truth, not by the infliction of suffering on the opponent but on one's own self."¹ It is nothing but *tapasya* for truth.² In this comprehensive sense it includes all constructive reforming activities, all acts of service. Satyagraha in this sense does not exclude even constitutional methods.

Satyagraha, specially its two principal offshoots, non-cooperation and civil disobedience, should not be confused with the passive resistance movements of South Africa and England in the beginning of this century. In South Africa Gandhiji himself used the term passive resistance in the sense of satyagraha. The XVII chapter of *Hind Swaraj* which is entitled "Passive Resistance" is really a description of satyagraha. But even in 1908 he was conscious that "Passive Resistance" was a more popular though less accurate description of satyagraha than soul-force or love force.³ Later he drew a clear distinction between these two terms.

Both satyagraha and passive resistance are methods of meeting aggression, settling conflicts and bringing about social and political changes. However, the two differ fundamentally. The difference between the two is due to the fact that passive resistance⁴ as practised, for example, by suffragettes and non-conformists in England and by Germans in the Ruhr against the French, is a political weapon of expediency, while satyagraha is a moral weapon based on the superiority of soul-force over physical force. Passive resistance is the weapon of the weak ; while satyagraha can be practised only by the bravest who have the courage of dying without killing. In passive resistance the aim is to embarrass the opponent into submission ; in satyagraha, to wean him from error by love and patient suffering. In passive resistance there is hardly any place for love for the opponent ; in satyagraha there is

1. *Speeches*, p. 501.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 838.

3. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 65.

4. Passive Resistance and non-resistance are generally interchangeably used. According to C. M. Case, however, non-resistance is essentially an attitude of submission and of passive suffering, while passive resistance is a more active and even aggressive attitude. C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 51.

no room for hatred, ill will and the like. Thus "satyagraha is dynamic, passive resistance is static. Passive resistance acts negatively and suffers reluctantly and infructuously ; satyagraha acts positively and suffers with cheerfulness because from love and makes the sufferings fruitful."¹ Though always distinguished from and generally avoiding violence which is not open to the weak, passive resistance does not exclude the use of violent methods on suitable occasions ; satyagraha, on the other hand, does not permit violence in any shape or form even under the most favourable circumstances. Unlike satyagraha passive resistance can be used as a supplement or preliminary to violent revolution. Passive resistance lacks inwardness : it does not share the scruples of satyagraha about the purity of means and ignores the moral character of persons employing it. On the other hand, in satyagraha there is an organic connection between the achievement of the objective and the inner reform of the satyagrahi. Passive resistance is not by its very nature universal in its application. It cannot, for example, be directed against one's dearest relations as satyagraha can be. Passive resistance offered in a spirit of weakness and despair is weakening psychologically and morally ; while satyagraha emphasizes all the time internal strength and actually develops it. Satyagraha can thus offer more effective and determined opposition to injustice and tyranny than passive resistance. All the same there is nothing passive about the latter, for resistance is always active.²

All the world over in every age non-violence has been the method of settling family disputes. Gandhiji has applied this rule of domestic life to various spheres of group life. By his life-long researches he has made satyagraha "the moral equivalent of war" and the technique of solving group conflicts.

But satyagraha, being soul-force, is "the Way, the Truth, the Life." It is applicable, in addition to conflicts, to all

1. Mahadeo Desai in a note in *Harijan*, June 25, 1938, p. 164.

2. *Experiments*, II, p. 154 ; *Y.I.*, I, p. 222 ; *Speeches*, p. 501 ; *South Africa*, ch. XII ; *H.*, May 14, 1938, p. 111 and June 25, 1938, p. 164.

other activities of life. Thus it can be applied by individuals in their daily life in relation to parents and children, friends and relations, even criminals and the sub-human creation. Says Gandhiji, "It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility."¹ "For me, the law of satyagraha, the law of love, is an eternal principle. I co-operate with all that is good. I desire to non-co-operate with all that is evil, whether it is associated with my wife, son or myself."²

In fact, he goes further and holds that if we want to make organized non-violence in group conflicts really effective, we must practise it in all aspects of our daily life.³ Our non-violence, if true, must be a part of our normal life, must be in our thought, word and deed and must colour all our behaviour.⁴ Non-violence in politics may be, he feels, a virtue of necessity and a cover for cowardice. It is only in relations other than those with the Government, e.g., in domestic and social relations, when we have an equal choice between violence and non-violence, that non-violence could be said not to be a mere expedient.⁵ This is why, according to him, non-violence like charity must begin at home. He says, "The Alphabet of *ahimsa* is best learnt in the domestic school, and I can say from experience that if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere. For a non-violent person the whole world is one family."⁶ Gandhiji insists that public satyagraha is only an extension of private or domestic satyagraha and that every case of the former should be tested by imagining a parallel domestic case.⁷

1. *V.I.*, III, p. 444.

2. *V.I.*, II, p. 1054.

3. *H.*, June 29, 1940, p. 181.

4. *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 210.

5. *H.*, Nov. 19, 1938, p. 336-37.

6. *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 214.

7. *V.I.*, II, p. 821.

It is, indeed, futile to try to enthrone non-violence in inter-group and international relations unless it is also sought to be enshrined in the hearts of individuals. Violence in the private life of a satyagrahi is an indication of inadequate discipline. It shows that he is blind to the basic law of satyagraha, the principle of spiritual kinship with others. It is an unmistakable sign that he has not yet reached that level of moral development and has not acquired that condition of self-mastery in which violence becomes intolerable. Human life being an indivisible whole, violence in the satyagrahi's private life must project itself into his behaviour as a member of the satyagrahi group.

Acceptance of non-violence by an individual in only public affairs means that his is the non-violence of the weak and that he accepts non-violence only as a policy which he may change in face of heavy odds and overwhelming temptations. This is a hesitant attitude which makes a poor soldier. "A soldier fights with an irresistible strength when he has blown up his bridges, burnt his boats. Even so it is with a soldier of *ahimsa*."¹ Gandhiji's advice, therefore, is that "*Ahimsa* must be placed before everything else while it is professed. Then alone it becomes irresistible. Otherwise it will be only an empty hulk, a thing without potency or power."¹

According to him, acceptance of non-violence as a weapon of expediency, as distinguished from genuine thorough-going non-violence, may, in the case of a dependent nationality like India, bring about political freedom. But this will be "democracy as machinery" or "parliamentary *Swaraj*" rather than real non-violent *Swaraj* or "democracy as faith." For "non-violence as expediency" means "non-violence so far as profitable and violence when necessary." Violence implies treating men as mere means. Non-violence of the weak is thus the denial of the basic principle of democracy, i.e., the least among men has infinite moral worth. On the other hand, non-violence of the brave stands for the

equality of all persons. It never encroaches on the rights of others and leaves them fullest scope for development. *Swaraj* won through a half-hearted non-violence will inevitably be followed by the usual scramble for seizing power. It will not bring freedom and power to the weak and the poor and will not be a genuine democracy. This is why Gandhiji is of opinion that non-violence of the weak will never take us to the goal of freedom, and "if long practised may even render us unfit for self-government."¹

It is remarkable that until recently Gandhiji did not insist on the satyagrahi accepting non-violence as a creed. This was, perhaps, the price he paid to collaborate with others to realize his ideal. He expected that the practice of non-violence as a policy would gradually prepare people for its acceptance as a creed. But this toning down is compromising one's means. His experience has brought home the mistake and he now demands of the satyagrahi a firm unshakable faith in the principle.

Historically too the use of non-violence by isolated individuals in their private life began long before its emergence as a group technique. Even Gandhiji had acquired extensive experience in the use of non-violence in various situations of life before he used it as a political technique. The lessons of truth and *ahimsa* were burnt into his soul in early childhood and he began to mould his life according to these laws. The environment in which he was brought up was steeped in Vaishnava and Jaina traditions of *ahimsa*. His saintly mother was a model of disciplined life reared on fasts and vows, and his exceptionally brave, truthful father set him an object lesson in non-violent resistance.² Even Mrs. Gandhi made her contribution by practising non-violent resistance against him. This is how Gandhiji pays his tribute to her, "I learnt the lesson of non-violence from my wife, when I tried to bend her to my will. Her determined resistance to my will on the one hand,

1. *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 197.

2. See pp. 15-16 *supra*.

and her quiet submission to the suffering my stupidity involved on the other hand, ultimately made me ashamed of myself and cured me of my stupidity in thinking I was born to rule over her ; and in the end she became my teacher in non-violence. And what I did in South Africa was but an extension of the rule of satyagraha which she unwillingly practised in her own person.”¹

Gandhiji's whole life is full of experiments which demonstrate how truth and love enable one to solve life's complex problems. With truth and love and silent suffering and, when occasion demanded, by fearlessly walking into the very jaws of *himsa*, he has converted many an inveterate opponent, drawing out the best in him. And whenever he notices a mistake or a failing on his part, he makes a clean and a prompt confession and adequate amends. His autobiography and other writings are replete with experiences of a most creative nature—experiences that have moulded his character and influenced his philosophy. The father of satyagraha could not have nursed it up into the mighty weapon capable of being wielded by large masses of men but for his long experience, right from his childhood onwards, in the working of the law of love in his personal life.

Accepting non-violence as the law of life implies that the individual must be non-violent in relation to others, particularly when resisting evil and injustice. The test of a satyagrahi's non-violence comes in the stress and strain of conflict. But before he proceeds to give battle to injustice emanating from others he must try to root it out in himself. “Non-violence begins and ends by turning the search light inward.”² Reforms in external conditions can come only after inner conditions are set right. The employment of satyagraha against others must be preceded by its employ-

1. Quoted by J. S. Holyland in *Mahatma Gandhi* edited by Sir S. Radhakrishnan. For an instance of this resistance on the part of Mrs. Gandhi see *Experiments*, II, ch. X, p. 138.

2. *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 98.

ment against oneself. This means intelligent cultivation of non-violent values. This self-discipline which includes control of thoughts and emotions develops in the satyagrahi the inner strength, the soul-force that becomes irresistible.

Gandhiji does not prescribe absolute *ahimsa* or complete self-discipline. These are not of this world. Perfectibility rather than perfection is his motto. He believes in eternal striving. The satyagrahi must put before himself the ideal of the non-violence of the brave. He must not let his non-violence degenerate into cowardice. For the rest he must try to approach the ideal as best he can.

Even in a progressive world there will always be important differences and some times conflicts. So far as the non-violent way of settling conflicts and resisting wrongs is concerned there often arise dreadful dilemmas rendering the path of the satyagrahi dim and dark. The satyagrahi must have patience and courage, initiative and resourcefulness, a spirit of research and readiness to take risks. For guidance as to how exactly to deal with a particular situation, he must depend on his own enlightened conscience. But we may state in this chapter Gandhiji's views on some general questions connected with satyagraha as individual action. No hard and fast line of demarcation can be drawn between satyagraha in dyadic and group relations. The principles of individual action also apply to corporate action which in addition requires thorough organization and much greater attention to discipline. The individual may employ non-violent resistance against individuals or groups. But generally satyagraha, when employed against some influential group on an important issue, develops into corporate action.

A satyagrahi is essentially a man of peace. He does not go about picking quarrels. He seeks his self-realization through social service. Whenever he finds some hindrance in the way, whenever his sensitive conscience perceives some injustice and he feels the inner urge, he uses the weapon of satyagraha to remove the obstacle. Satyagraha can be

undertaken only for social good and never for personal gain ;¹ for one who cannot rise above considerations of personal gain and loss is unfit to be a satyagrahi who has to be always ready to stake his all to vindicate truth and justice. The desire to protect one's self-respect is however a "good cause", for the society in which self-respect is at a discount is morally in a bad way. Obviously ill-gotten gains and immoral acts cannot be defended by satyagraha.²

Even in regard to issues involving social good the satyagrahi will decide upon non-violent resistance after taking into consideration his own limitations and the nature and gravity of injustice. Thus, as Gandhiji's life bears out, he may on occasions overlook a small injustice in order to conserve his strength for bigger battles.³

The aim of individual as well as group satyagraha is not to crush, defeat or punish the tyrant or break his will. It is not even to harm or embarrass him, though the resistance and suffering may, as a matter of fact, cause the wrong-doer embarrassment. The satyagrahi loves the opponent and aims at rousing him to a sense of equity by an appeal to the best in him, i.e., at converting him. Conversion implies that the opponent realizes his mistake, repents and there takes place a peaceful adjustment of differences. As Gandhiji once remarked to Miss Agatha Harrison, "The essence of non-violent technique is that it seeks to liquidate antagonisms but not the antagonists."⁴ He wrote in 1940, "The end of non-violent 'war' is always an agreement, never dictation, much less humiliation of the opponent."⁵ Thus the satyagrahi fights with a view to bilateral victory and not a unilateral victory. He aims at the integration and not suppression of legitimate differences.

The aim indicates the method. Negatively, the satya-

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 1183.
2. *H.*, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 236.
3. *Experiments*, I, p. 345.
4. *H.*, April 29, 1939, p. 101.
5. *H.*, March 23, 1940, p. 53.

grahi should try to avoid violence in all forms. Violence seeks to destroy the opponent or at least to injure him, and this is not the way to convert or reform him. The satyagrahi should try to avoid all intentional injury to the opponent in thought, word and deed. Thus he should not harbour anger, hatred, ill will, suspicion, vindictiveness or other similar divisive feelings. As regards speech, he should avoid all abusive, insulting, haughty, or needlessly offensive language. In his actions he should not rely on brute force, for to do so is to co-operate with the evil-doer and lend him support. In spite of all provocation the satyagrahi should not be intolerant, and vindictive and should not frighten the opponent. If assaulted, he should not prosecute his assailant, and he should not call in outsiders to assist him, for either course would mean that he is depending on physical force.

Positively, "A satyagrahi will always try to overcome evil by good, anger by love, untruth by truth, *himsa* by *ahimsa*."¹ The satyagrahi, who is conscious of the working of soul-force and of his own spiritual kinship with the opponent, should treat the opponent as a member of his family. To wean the opponent from his error he should use the domestic method which makes the resolution of the conflict easy by minimising differences and emphasizing points of agreement. Says Gandhiji, "I must apply the same rules to the wrong-doer who is my enemy as I would to my wrong-doing father or son."²

This is how Gandhiji describes the domestic method: "Family disputes and differences are generally settled according to the law of love. The injured member has so much regard for the others that he suffers injuries for the sake of his principles without retaliating and without being angry with those who differ from him. And as repression of anger, self-suffering are difficult processes, he does not magnify trifles into principles, but in all non-essentials readily agrees with the rest of the family, and thus contrives to gain

1. *Y.I.*, August 8, 1929.

2. *Speeches*, p. 284.

the maximum of peace for himself without disturbing that of others. Thus his action, whether he resists or resigns, is always calculated to promote the common welfare of the family."¹

The way to treat the opponent as a member of the family is to give him the same credit for honesty of purpose which the satyagrahi claims for himself.² He should persistently trust the opponent even if he does not know him or has come to regard him as untrustworthy.³ "Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the satyagrahi is ready to trust him the twenty-first time, for an implicit faith in human nature is the very essence of his creed."⁴

The technique of satyagraha in dyadic relations, on the analogy of domestic quarrels, includes persuasion and discussion, settlement of differences by one in whose judgment the two parties trust, non-co-operation, civil disobedience of the orders of the offender if he happens to be in exercise of authority, suffering of hardships that come as a result of this resistance, fasting, etc. All along the struggle should be clean and the satyagrahi must scrupulously stick to truth and *ahimsa*.

Devotion to truth demands that the satyagrahi should not be blind to the best in the evil-doer. To do full justice to the adversary he must keep his mind in a detached state, try to understand the adversary's point of view and, if necessary, revise his judgment.⁵ The satyagrahi must always hold himself open to conviction, and whenever he discovers himself in the wrong he must confess his mistake at all costs and atone for it.⁶ The strength of the satyagrahi consists in his moral superiority over the opponent. Persistence in untruth means bartering away real strength for a false sense

1. *Speeches*, p. 502.

2. *Y.J.*, II, p. 1319.

3. *H.*, June 3, 1939, p. 150.

4. *South Africa*, p. 246.

5. *Y.J.*, II, pp. 227 and 1320 ; *Y.J.*, III, p. 387.

6. *Experiments*, II, p. 232.

of prestige. "Confession of error", writes Gandhiji, "is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before . . . Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path."¹

The error of the opponent may be due either to ignorance or selfishness and ill will—though selfishness and ill will are ultimately due to ignorance. The first step that the satyagrahi takes in a conflict, be it individual or collective, is persuasion, negotiation and discussion. If necessary he also agrees to arbitration by a third party. Thus the satyagrahi launches upon the extreme step not abruptly but only after gentler methods have failed.

It is just possible that desire and readiness for discussion may be lacking on the part of the adversary and so the stage of negotiations may never be reached. But if it is not, it must not be for the fault of the satyagrahi.² Even if the preliminary negotiations fail, the satyagrahi is always willing to utilize any opening for peaceful settlement at every stage of the struggle. Indeed, if necessary, he may go out of his way to knock at the adversary's door, for he is not deterred by false notions of prestige. Once in the non-violent struggle in South Africa Gandhiji, even though he had the least hope for a compromise, thrust himself on General Smuts. The General relented and Gandhiji's last effort was successful. But though the satyagrahi is always ready to give and take and for a "voluntary surrender of non-essentials",³ he would never compromise on the basic moral issues involved in the conflict. "My compromises", Gandhiji once remarked, "will never be at the cost of the cause or the country."⁴

Critics in India find fault with Gandhiji for the great importance he always attaches to efforts for compromise with the opponent. The policy of parleys and postponements,

1. *Y.I.*, I, p. 996.

2. *H.*, June 24, 1939, pp. 169-70 and 172.

3. *Y.I.*, III, p. 1058.

4. *H.*, March 30, 1940, p. 70.

according to them, makes it appear that they are on the verge of compromise, soothes the satyagrahis and exhausts their energy so that when ultimately the conflict does come, the requisite atmosphere is lacking for it.

To Gandhiji, however, eagerness for compromise is an integral part of satyagraha. The satyagrahi, conscious of his spiritual kinship with the adversary, actually loves him and aims at peace. The exploration by him of all the legitimate avenues of peaceful settlement clearly brings out this objective of his. It shows that the satyagrahi has been compelled to the drastic step of direct action because there is left for him no honourable way out. This gives to satyagraha its essentially defensive character. It also wins for the satyagrahi the support of public opinion.

Negotiation and compromise must come at some stage, at the end of the conflict at any rate. A recourse to them in the beginning may possibly save all concerned the strain involved in the conflict. Besides, the very insistence on truth which men always see in fragment and from different perspectives teaches the satyagrahi the need for compromise. "I am essentially a man of compromise", Gandhiji once said to Louis Fischer, "because I am never sure that I am right."¹ This is why to Gandhiji "full surrender of non-essentials is a condition precedent to accession of internal strength to defend the essential by dying."² Thus if the satyagrahi precipitates battle or bangs the door on negotiations, he puts himself in the wrong.

Eagerness for compromise in group satyagraha should not undermine the morale of satyagrahis. For all the time the leader and his lieutenants keep in close touch with the rank and file, educating them and explaining to them the significance of persuasion and effort for compromise in the strategy of non-violence. The success of violent revolutions depends on working up of the divisive emotions of masses to a high tension point so as to cause an outburst and any talk

1. Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi*, p. 102.

2. *H.*, Nov. 10, 1940, p. 333.

of peace would be a fatal distraction to such a movement. But it is not so in satyagraha which seeks to arouse constructive, unifying sentiments, love for the adversary, non-retaliation and eagerness to suffer in order to serve. If efforts for compromise lead to demoralisation, it is a sure sign of the absence of the real spirit of satyagraha. Even if the adversary is insincere and uses negotiations as a screen for his plans to consolidate his strength, the satyagrahi need not be worried. Real strength is moral superiority and, if all is well in the satyagrahi camp, the preparedness of the adversary is immaterial.¹

If the appeal to reason fails due to the wrong-doer's short-sightedness or selfishness, the only other way for the satyagrahi is to appeal to the opponent's heart. This the satyagrahi does by undertaking voluntary suffering.

Gandhiji attaches very great importance to suffering. He calls satyagraha 'the law of suffering' and '*tapasya* for truth.' He writes, "Nothing can shake me from the conviction that given a good cause, suffering for it advances it as nothing else has done."² "Progress is to be measured by the amount of suffering undergone by the sufferer. The purer the suffering, the greater is the progress."³ "No country has ever risen without being purified through the fire of suffering. Mother suffers so that her child may live. The condition of wheat-growing is that seed grain should perish. Life comes out of death."⁴ Purity implies discipline and Gandhiji points out that mere sacrifice without discipline will be unavailing. The indication that one has acquired adequate discipline is that suffering should become a joy and the individual should begin to delight "in plunging head-long into the mouth of *himsa*."

There is no limit to the suffering that an act of satyagraha may entail. The satyagrahi must exercise restraint under

1. *H.*, Feb. 17, 1940, p. 2.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 838.

3. *Y.I.*, I, p. 231.

4. *Y.I.*, I, p. 230.

the gravest provocation and cheerfully bear all sorts of losses and inconveniences—assaults, beating, excommunication, loss of property, even death. He must be willing to stake his all except honour.¹ And he must continue to stagger his opponent till his suffering strikes a responsive chord in the latter's heart and gradually converts him.

Nothing is of greater importance than suffering so far as the conversion of the opponent in vital matters is concerned. It plays a far greater part than reasoning and persuasion. To quote Gandhiji, "if you want something really important to be done, you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also. The appeal of the reason is more to the head, but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man."² Again, "I have found that mere appeal to reason does not answer where prejudices are agelong . . . Reason has to be strengthened by suffering and suffering opens up the eyes of understanding."³

But how does vicarious suffering redeem the evil-doer? How does it melt his heart and open up the inner understanding in him?

In a few passages scattered in his writings Gandhiji describes the working of satyagraha on individual and group scale and the way the conversion of the opponent is brought about by the suffering of the satyagrahi.

When the satyagrahi practises true *ahimsa* and suffers voluntarily, his love, i.e., soul-force, develops tremendous potency, and due to the principle of spiritual unity he affects and elevates the entire environment and all people around him including the opponent. Says Gandhiji, "The more you develop it (non-violence) in your being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world."⁴ "The greater our innocence the greater our strength and the swifter our victory."⁵ In a recent letter to a Delhi journalist who

1. *H.*, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 236.

2. *Y.I.*, Nov. 5, 1931.

3. *Y.I.*, II, p. 1320.

4. *H.*, January 28, 1939, p. 443.

5. *Speeches* p. 639.

questioned the efficacy of non-violence in the modern materialistic world, Gandhiji wrote, "Do you not realise that when non-violence reigns, materialism takes a back seat, avenues are changed and in a non-violent war there is no waste of efforts, property or moral fibre?"¹

Thus the purification of the suffering satyagrahi also cleanses and strengthens the spirit of the opponent. Similarly his love force acts on and wins the sympathy and support of public opinion.

Gandhiji also explains the working of non-violence psychologically. "The strong in body in their insolence often mobilize their 'hard fibre' . . . But when that 'hard fibre' comes in contact not with its like but with the exact opposite, it has nothing to work against. A solid body can only move on against another solid body. You cannot build castles in the air."² "The wrong-doer wearies of wrongdoing in the absence of resistance. All pleasure is lost when the victim betrays no resistance."³ Again, "I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer instead would elude him. It would at first dazzle him and at last compel recognition from him which recognition would not humiliate him but uplift him."⁴

A very important psychological reason that Gandhiji gives for the effective working of satyagraha is that it affects the

1. Extracts from the letter published in *Hindustan Times*, January 24, 1941.

2. *Speeches*, p. 711.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 639.

4. *V.I.*, II, p. 864.

One of the Secretaries of General Smuts said to Gandhiji towards the end of the South African struggle, "I often wish you took to violence like the English strikers, and then we would know at once how to dispose of you. But you will not injure even the enemy. You desire victory by self-suffering alone and never transgress your self-imposed limits of courtesy and chivalry. And that is what reduces us to sheer helplessness." General Smuts also expressed similar sentiments. *South Africa*, p. 492.

adversary unconsciously, and the unconscious effect of our actions is far greater than the conscious effect. "In violence there is nothing invisible. Non-violence on the other hand is three-fourths invisible and so the effect is in the inverse ratio to its invisibility. Non-violence, when it becomes active, travels with extraordinary velocity and then it becomes a miracle."¹ Thus the mind of the opponent is first affected unconsciously and then consciously. Conscious effect means conversion.

Gandhiji pointedly compares the silent, subtle, unseen working of non-violence to homœopathic treatment. "Non-co-operation is not an allopathic treatment. It is homœopathic. The patient does not taste the drops given to him. He is sometimes even incredulous, but if the homœopaths are to be trusted, the tasteless drops or the tiny pills of homœopathy are far more potent than ounce doses or choking pills of allopathy. I assure the reader the effect of purifying non-co-operation is more certain than the effect of homœopathic medicine."²

Further, satyagraha is an unfailing remedy against all injustice and exploitation, for the latter presume the co-operation between the victim and the victimizer. When this co-operation is withdrawn by the satyagrahi, the opponent is thwarted and rendered powerless. Thus referring to the relation between the tyrannical rulers and the satyagrahi ruled, Gandhiji remarked in 1917, "They (rulers) know that they cannot effectively exercise force against the Passive Resister. Without his concurrence they cannot make him do their will."³

In short, the non-violence of the satyagrahi staggers the violent opponent and upsets his moral balance.⁴ The

1. *H.*, March 20, 1937, pp. 41-2.

2. *Y.J.*, I, p. 988.

3. *Speeches*, p. 393.

4. R. B. Gregg aptly styles non-violent conflict as the moral *jūjutsu* which turns on moral equipoise. Due to the non-violence and goodwill of the victim the attacker loses the moral balance which he would not in case the usual violent resistance of the victim were forth-coming. See R. B. Gregg, *The Power of Non-violence*, ch. III, specially p. 43.

satyagrahi remains calm and unperturbed and does not retaliate. This exhausts the brute spirit of the opponent for want of nutrition.¹ His dynamic love and goodwill, his fearless interest in the moral welfare of the opponent and his attempt to discover and appeal to the best in him eliminate the hostile feelings in the opponent. Gradually the latter becomes weary and ashamed of his violence, his generous emotions are aroused, he softens, responds and repents. The satyagrahi's eagerness for a just compromise makes the settlement of the dispute easy. If the wrong-doer is past remedy, he compasses his own end, for he finds himself isolated.²

But though suffering is the core of satyagraha there should be no eagerness on the part of the satyagrahi to be demonstrative and to strive after stage effect. To do so is to miss the very spirit of satyagraha and to take leave of one's humility. Gandhiji believes that the key to quick success is humility expressing itself in "silent and undemonstrative action of truth and love" and not showy performances.³

It is sometimes supposed that the satyagrahi forces the oppressor to be brutal to the last extreme and manœuvres the opponent into being injurious.⁴ With Gandhiji, however, suffering is merely a means to the conversion of the opponent and, according to him, brutalizing can but make the conversion the more difficult. In fact, Gandhiji has repeatedly protested that the aim of the satyagrahi is to prevent the brutalization of the opponent,⁵ and that the opponent should not be compelled to inflict punishment. To the satyagrahi suffering, even death, is welcome but it should come unsought. "Let us all be brave enough to die the death of a

1. *Y.I.*, I. p. 909.

2. *H.*, Dec. 16, 39, p. 376.

We have confined ourselves to Gandhiji's writings in the above account of the working of non-violent resistance. R. B. Gregg gives a closely similar analysis of the mental and moral mechanism involved in the non-violent conflict and the resulting conversion. See his *Power of Non-violence*, chapters II and III.

3. *Y.I.*, Aug. 8, 1929 ; *Y.I.*, I, p. 278.

4. This, for example, is the opinion expressed by K. Shridharani in his *War without Violence*, p. 265.

5. *H.*, April 15, 1839, p. 87.

martyr, but let no one lust for martyrdom.”¹ In 1924 Gandhiji expressed his disapproval of Sikh satyagrahis inviting fire by resisting arrests.²

He explicitly warns the satyagrahi not to feed deliberately the provocation of the opponent³ but to meet all the provocative and repressive measures of the opponent with exemplary self-restraint even at the risk of being charged with cowardice.⁴ He also feels that genuine satyagraha, being a spiritual exercise, can never provoke reprisals. It can evoke the best, not the worst, in man.⁵ By ‘the best’ obviously he does not mean good temper. Indeed, in evoking the best the wrong-doer may have to be ruffled.

One of the important offshoots of satyagraha, and a form of suffering, is non-violent non-co-operation. It is “the expression of anguished love.”⁶ Non-co-operation is always undertaken with a view to co-operation after the opponent has been cured of his violence. Gandhiji once said to Miss Agatha Harrison, “Although non-co-operation is the main weapon in the armoury of satyagraha, it should not be forgotten that it is after all only a means to secure the co-operation of the opponent consistently with truth and justice.”⁷ He wrote in 1925, “Behind my non-co-operation there is always the keenest desire to co-operate on the slightest pretext even with the worst of opponents. To me, a very imperfect mortal, ever in need of God’s grace no one is beyond redemption.”⁸

The idea that underlies non-co-operation is that even the evil-doer does not succeed in his purpose without carrying the victim with him, if necessary, by force, and that it is the duty of the satyagrahi to suffer for the consequences of resis-

1. *Y.I.*, III, p. 20.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 838.

3. *H.*, March 2, 1940, p. 22.

4. *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 143.

5. *H.*, March 27, 1939, p. 144.

6. *Y.I.*, I, p. 241.

7. *H.*, April 29, 1939, p. 101.

8. *Y.I.*, II, p. 517.

tance and not to yield to the will of the tyrant. If the victim continues to tolerate the wrong by passive acquiescence, if he enjoys benefits accruing from that wrong or wrong-doer directly or indirectly, the victim is an accessory to the tyrant's misdeeds.

Non-co-operation can be violent also. But violent non-co-operation only multiplies evil. As evil can only be sustained by violence, non-co-operation must be non-violent. Non-co-operation also includes disobedience, in a civil manner, of the orders of the tyrant. But civil disobedience plays its important part in the corporate aspect of satyagraha and so we may postpone it to the next chapter.

Non-co-operation is a universal remedy applicable to problems of every day life. It can be used even against intimate relations. Gandhiji writes, "If my son lives a life of shame, I may not help him to do so by continuing to support him. On the contrary my love for him requires me to withdraw all support from him although it may mean even his death. And the same love imposes on me the obligation of welcoming him to my bosom when he repents."¹

Similarly, "If a father does an injustice it is the duty of his children to leave the parental roof. If the Headmaster of a school conducts his institution on an immoral basis, the pupils must leave the school. If the chairman of a corporation is corrupt, the members thereof must wash their hands clean of his corruption by withdrawing from it ; even so, if a Government does grave injustice, the subjects must withdraw co-operation wholly or partially sufficiently to wean the ruler from his wickedness. In each of the cases conceived by me there is an element of suffering whether mental or physical. Without such suffering it is not possible to attain freedom."²

When the wrong-doer can do even without the satyagrahi's co-operation, the object of satyagraha is self-purification.

1. *Y.J.*, I, p. 247.

2. *Y.J.*, I, p. 233-34.

When a friend gives up another and a servant his master, they practise this mild variety of non-co-operation. On the other hand if the evil-doer cannot do without the satyagrahi's co-operation, non-co-operation assumes a drastic form. A father's giving up a dependent son is an instance. The drastic type of non-co-operation no doubt causes inconvenience and maybe even injury to the opponent. But all the while the object of the non-co-operator should be conversion and his weapon love. The drastic type of non-co-operation should be undertaken on grave issues. The inconvenience of the opponent must cause pain to the satyagrahi, and non-co-operation should bring to the satyagrahi suffering of some sort.¹ If non-co-operation causes all the suffering to the opponent and none to the satyagrahi the presumption should be that it is a case of violent non-co-operation. The satyagrahi seeks truth by imposing suffering not on others but on himself.

Even while non-co-operating the satyagrahi must make the opponent feel that he has a friend in the former. The satyagrahi should also try to reach the opponent's heart by rendering him humanitarian service whenever possible.²

The ultimate and the most potent weapon in the armoury of satyagraha is fasting. Gandhiji calls it a fiery weapon,³ and claims to have reduced it to a science.⁴ Non-co-operation brings passive suffering inflicted by the opponent ; fasting is suffering self-inflicted. As against non-co-operation, it is of strictly limited application, and the distinction between its use and misuse, between satyagrahi fasting and *duragrahi* fasting or hunger strike, is discernible with much greater difficulty than in the case of non-co-operation.

So delicate, indeed, is this spiritual weapon and so high the level of moral sensitiveness that it requires in a satyagrahi that even Gandhiji, the greatest authority on satyagraha, has sometimes made mistakes in its use. Thus in his Rajkot

1. *Y.I.*, I, pp. 234 and 300.

2. *H.*, Nov. 12, 1938, p. 327.

3. *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 332.

4. His statement to the press, dated Sept. 21, 1932.

fast, in itself justified, Gandhiji later felt that he ought not to have sought the intervention of the British Government. This vitialed the fast as a means of converting the late Thakore of the state whom Gandhiji regarded, due to his old family connections, his son and whose breach of the plighted word had occasioned the fast. Later Gandhiji renounced the advantages gained as a result of this intervention.¹

Fasting, as stated earlier, may be used as penance or purification for fuller self-expression, i.e., for the attainment of spirit's supremacy over the flesh.² It then refers to one's own mistakes and failings and is a great discipline and a most powerful factor in one's evolution.

Fasting is also a means of resisting injustice and converting the evil-doer. As such it is "the highest expression of the prayer of a pure and loving heart." But this weapon cannot be lightly wielded. It can be resorted to on rare occasions and by one skilled in the art or under expert guidance.³ If undertaken without previous preparation and adequate thought it is not a satyagrahi fast but hunger strike.

Gandhiji lays down the qualifications of the person who can use this form of satyagraha and the occasion when it can be properly resorted to.⁴ Mere physical capacity to fast is no qualification. The satyagrahi must possess spiritual fitness and a clear vision. A living faith in God is also indispensable. In a satyagrahi fast there can be no room for lack of faith, anger, impatience, or selfishness.⁵ These make the fast

1. It is wrong to suppose that Gandhiji undertook the Rajkot fast to obtain political rights for the people of Rajkot. Political rights would have been secured if the Thakore kept his word. But ethically the two objects stand far apart.

For another mistake in connection with the Ahmedabad labour-strike fast see *Experiments*, II, pp. 422-3.

2. See pp. 115-6 *supra*.

3. *H.*, March 11, 1939, p. 46.

4. *Experiments*, II, p. 213 ; *Y.I.*, II, p. 1183 ; *H.*, March 18, 1939, p. 56.

5. Thus a fast to wring money from a person or even to recover a debt is an instance of coercive hunger strike undertaken for a selfish purpose. Such misuse deserves to be firmly resisted, for, if fasting with a view to recover money were encouraged, there would be no end to scoundrels black-mailing people by resorting to this means. See *H.*, Sept. 9, 1933 and *Y.I.*, II, p. 1183.

violent. "... In addition to truth and non-violence a Satyagrahi should have the confidence that God will grant him the necessary strength and that, if there is the slightest impurity in the fast, he will not hesitate to renounce it at once. Infinite patience, firm resolve, single-mindedness of purpose, perfect calm and no anger must of necessity be there. But since it is impossible for a person to develop all these qualities all at once, no one who has not devoted himself to following the laws of *ahimsa* should undertake a Satyagrahi fast."¹ According to Gandhiji, those intending to go in for a satyagrahi fast should certainly possess some personal experience of fasts for spiritual purification.²

It is obvious from the above that fasting, though it has a place in individual as well as group conflicts, cannot be used correctly and effectively by the masses. It can be resorted to only by select and qualified individuals.

The mistake of the person or the group for whose reform a fast is undertaken must have moved the satyagrahi to the very depth of his being, and he must feel an inner urge, the clear call of conscience. It cannot be undertaken against one's opponent ; for it will be a kind of violence done to him. The satyagrahi invites penalty from the opponent for disobedience of his orders, but he cannot inflict on himself penalties when the opponent refuses to punish him.³ Fasting can be resorted to only against one's nearest and dearest and solely for his or her good.⁴

The object of the satyagrahi's love for whose reform he undertakes a fast may be an individual or a group. Thus Gandhiji's Rajkot fast was with a view to make the ruler repent his breach of promise. His fast during the Bombay riots in 1921 was directed against the people of that place, being a warning appeal to them to stop the riots. The epic

1. *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 322.

2. *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 322.

3. D. G. Tendulkar and Others, *Gandhiji, His Life and Work*, pp. 368-9.

4. It would be a clear case of its misuse for an ordinary satyagrahi volunteer indiscriminately to fast for imposing his opinion on his co-villagers or neighbours and compelling them to withdraw co-operation from the Government. *Y.I.*, I, p. 941 ; *Y.I.*, II, p. 1183.

fast of 1932 was undertaken by him "to sting Hindu conscience to right religious action" and to pit his own life against the efforts of the British Government to separate the depressed classes from the caste Hindus by giving the latter separate electorates.¹

Though Gandhiji holds that satyagraha in the form of fasting cannot be undertaken against an opponent, this general principle admits of exceptions. He himself fasted at least twice against the British Government and once he warned the Government against a fast. On December 2, 1932, while a prisoner, he went on a sympathetic fast to lend support to Syt. Patwardhan's demand for scavenging work in jail.² On August 15, 1933, Gandhiji again started fasting against the Government. He was a civil disobedience prisoner and demanded facilities for guiding, from inside jail, the anti-untouchability movement which he made his sole concern after his fast of September 1932. After about a week of fasting, the Government released him unconditionally.

In 1932 he warned the then Secretary of State for India that the Government terrorism had crossed the legitimate bounds and was brutalizing and demoralizing the officials, that this alarming state of affairs was agitating his fundamental being and that as a protest he might, if there was a call from within, sacrifice himself by fasting to a finish.³ Soon after this warning Gandhiji threw himself into the movement for the removal of untouchability and the ordeal of fasting to a finish was avoided.

The last twenty-one days' "fast according to capacity" was Gandhiji's protest against the attitude of the British

1. His statement to the press, dated Sept. 21, 1932. This fast of his no doubt succeeded in attaining its immediate objective as well as in raising a firmment in Hindu society. But it induced some of the Harijan leaders to consent to the giving up of separate electorates against their will.
2. Syt. Patwardhan was a satyagrahi prisoner fasting to enforce his demand. The request which had been previously rejected by the Government was conceded soon after Gandhiji's fast began.
3. His letter, dated the Yeravda Central Prison, March 11, 1932, reproduced in full in *History of the Congress*, pp. 908-12.

Government in India and “ an appeal to the highest tribunal ” for justice which he had failed to secure from the Government. The Government held the Congress, and particularly Gandhiji, responsible for the campaign of violence and revolutionary activity which broke out in India on August 9, 1942. Gandhiji laid the whole blame for these happenings at the door of the Government whose tyrannical policy drove the people to the point of madness. He repeatedly pleaded with the Government to convince him of his error and promised to make adequate amends. But the charges were never proved before an impartial tribunal. This condemnation without trial made him a helpless witness to what was going on in the country including the privations of the millions owing to the universal scarcity stalking the land and caused him intense agony. According to him, the remedy prescribed by the law of satyagraha in such moments of trial was to “ crucify the flesh by fasting.”¹

The above instances indicate that occasionally a mighty tyrant's misdeeds may so circumscribe the satyagrahi's life and freedom that the anguished soul may call for this last line of resistance.

One of these compelling conditions which would justify satyagrahi prisoners employing the weapon is insulting, inhuman behaviour towards them. Some instances of such behaviour are throwing of the prisoners' food at them, depriving them of their religious liberty, using abusive language, etc. Its use would not be justified for securing release from imprisonment.²

The method of fasting has been subjected to very severe criticism. It has been characterized as terrorism against which “ the action of an opponent has no alternative between surrender and the fasting individual's suicide.”³

1. The correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and the Viceroy published in the Indian press in February 1943.
2. *South Africa*, pp. 345-46 ; J. H. Holmes, *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 209-10 and 215 ; *H.*, Aug. 19, 1939, p. 240 and April 23, 1938, p. 89.
3. Mr George Arundale's correspondence with Gandhiji published in the Indian Press in March 1939.

On the occasion of Gandhiji's Yeravda fast Tagore called it "the ultimatum of mortification to God for his scheme of things." To resort to it is, according to him, to refuse the great gift of life with all its opportunities to hold up till the last moment the ideal of perfection which justifies humanity.¹ Besides one may make a mistake about the imperative necessity of fasting and thus abruptly terminate one's power to further the cause of truth and love. There is also the danger that it may be exploited by some as a measure of coercion and intimidation.

Further, it is natural for people to fear lest the fasting satyagrahi may fast to death and to yield to his demands. This risk is especially great if the satyagrahi is a great man like Gandhiji whose unique place in national life exerts an almost irresistible pressure on the opponent. Fasting may thus inhibit clear thinking and may lead to coercion instead of conversion. This is a risk which fasting shares with all kinds of suffering. The sight of suffering causes a sympathetic response in the beholder. This response renders a dispassionate discussion of the issue of the conflict difficult, at least for the time being. But persuasion and gentler methods failing, undertaking suffering to convert the opponent is far better than inflicting suffering to suppress him. Besides, in the long run the issue is clarified and truth prevails.

Gandhiji is fully alive to the risks involved in fasting as a method of satyagraha.² This is why he insists on its being very sparingly used and only by those or under the direction of those who have mastered the science of satyagraha and acquired the necessary discipline.

But, though risky in practice, it is undoubtedly sound in principle. Life after all is a means to self-expression and

1. His letters to Gandhiji published in *Harijan*, July 1, 1933.

2. Gandhiji draws a distinction between satyagrahi fasting and suicide. The will to live is rational and natural and life has a purpose. To commit suicide defeats that purpose and is not justified. But if a person suffering from an incurable disease feels that he has become a burden to others, and that his life has become as much agony for those who have to serve him as for himself, he may well dispose of his life. Being tired of struggle or intense physical pain, however, does not justify this extreme step. *H.*, June 10, 1940, p. 146.

may be staked when there is available no other means of seeking redress from an intolerable moral situation. Fasting has been for ages, and will ever remain, an effective method of conversion. The ultimate strength of *ahimsa* lies in self-immolation even as the ultimate strength of *himsa* consists in devouring the opponent. Gandhiji's own conclusion is that "Fasting unto death is an integral part of *satyagraha* programme. . . ."¹

The satyagrahi's mainstay is his inner strength, his soul-force. He must not, therefore, depend on external help. For ". . . the strength of the spirit within mostly evaporates when a person gets and accepts support from outside. A satyagrahi must always be on his guard against such temptations."² Gandhiji supports the argument by referring to domestic quarrels. If a satyagrahi wishes to remove untouchability from his family, he will surely not invite friends to suffer with him but will bear all the penalties his father inflicts on him and rely on the law of love and suffering to melt his heart. The satyagrahi may invite the friends of the family to persuade the father. But he may allow no one to share with him the privilege and the duty of suffering.³ Gandhiji is against the satyagrahi suing in the court or calling the police because these are external aids meant to coerce and not to convert.

According to Gandhiji, the non-violence of the satyagrahi must be judged by its result. The satyagrahi's *ahimsa* is pure and his suffering adequate if the opponent's heart is touched and he comes round. "I hold it to be an axiomatic truth that true *ahimsa* never fails to impress itself on the opponent. If it does, to that extent it is imperfect."⁴ "A non-violent action accompanied by non-violence in thought and word should never produce enduring violent reaction upon the opponent."⁵ The opponent should feel that resistance is not intended to do him any harm and his attitude must soften.

1. Gandhiji, *His Life and Work*, cited above, p. 370.

2. *South Africa*, p. 286.

3. *Y.J.*, II, pp. 821-2.

3. *H.*, May 6, 1939, p. 112.

4. *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 172.

“... *ahimsa* ought to soften and not to stiffen our opponent's attitude to us ; it ought to melt him ; it ought to strike a responsive chord in his heart.”¹

Satyagraha as the way of life implies that our non-violence must extend to the criminal also.

It is the criminals that suffer most from violence in society. In fact, coercion is claimed as an essential attribute of sovereignty on account of the need to punish crime for the maintenance of the system of rights. Non-violence, it is said, may do when the conflict is between decent persons, but it would be of no avail against a criminal. Gandhiji rejects this line of thought and holds that “It is only when you meet with resistance, as for instance, when a thief or murderer appears, that your non-violence is put on its trial . . . Living among decent people your conduct may not be described as non-violent.”²

“All crime,” says Gandhiji, “is a disease and should be treated as such.”³ The disease is mainly social, though sometimes it is also individual. Thus insanity, drunkenness, feeble-mindedness, etc. which lead to crime are often caused and aggravated by heredity, defective social institutions and other adverse circumstances like insecurity, ignorance, injustice and poverty. And for these society is largely responsible. The worst diseases of the modern society are love of wealth and love of power. These vitiate our entire social, economic and political life so as to favour the few at the cost of the many.

The penal system also aggravates the malady. In actual practice Governments still stick to retribution and deterrence. On these is often super-imposed the object of reforming the prisoner, but reform goes ill with retribution and the result is large figures of recidivism. Besides, the penal problem cannot be satisfactorily solved unless we overhaul the entire economic and political structure.

1. *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 72.

2. *H.*, May 13, 1939, p. 121.

3. *H.*, April 27, 1940, p. 101.

Gandhiji seeks to carry through an all round revolution so as to minimise violence and usher in the non-violent State. This consummation will undoubtedly attack the problem at the root and enormously diminish crimes.

He, however, does not look forward to a time when man will have attained perfection and crime will have completely disappeared. Crime, no doubt, can be minimised but not eliminated. So the non-violent State of his conception will not be a policeless and prisonless State. But the police and the prison will be far different from what they are today, and the criminal will be non-violently weaned from crime.¹

But the first step lies with the individual. Unless the average man adopts non-violence as a creed, the non-violent State can never be realized. The satyagrahi who adopts non-violence as a creed should treat the criminal even as he treats an ordinary opponent.

Most of the serious crimes either relate to property, or are assaults on women. So far as property is concerned, the satyagrahi is inspired by the ideals of non-possession and bread-labour and should own as little as possible. In any case he should not possess more than what is necessary for his moral, mental and physical well-being. To be rich amidst grinding poverty is illegitimate and "Non-violence in the very nature of things is of no assistance in the defence of ill-gotten gains."² If the satyagrahi looks upon some property as his own, he may keep it only so long as the world allows him to own it.³

He should avoid all violent defence of property, seek no outside help, endure thieves and burglars, treating them like erring blood-brothers and apply non-violence intelligently.⁴ Thus, doors may be left open and belongings so arranged as to be easily accessible. Persuasion may be used, if there is an opportunity. This uncommon kindness will, in an average

1. For details see Chapter XI *infra*.

2. *H.*, Sept. 5, 1936, p. 236.

3. *H.*, Aug. 18, 1940, p. 254.

4. *Y.I.*, II, pp. 867-68 ; *Yeravda Mandir*, pp. 10-12 ; *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 63-65 ; *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 194.

case, upset and agitate the thief. He would respond to the satyagrahi's love and reform his ways. To meet the menace of thieves and dacoits the satyāgrahi should also go among, and cultivate friendly relations with, the communities from which thieves and dacoits generally come.¹

In case somebody seeks to deprive the satyagrahi of some property which he holds as a trustee, his suffering will take a different form. Instead of bearing the loss of property he will put himself between the despoiler and his object and die, if necessary, in the attempt to save it without using any violence.

As regards the trans-border tribesmen living on the north-western frontier of India who plunder and kidnap people of the Frontier Province, Gandhiji has been advising the people to learn the art of non-violent self-defence. A non-violent approach to the problem involves trusting and befriending the tribes and not regarding them natural enemies. Efforts should be made to serve them and explain to them things in a loving and sympathetic manner. People of the Frontier Province should also try to raise these tribesmen above penury by teaching them cottage industries and thus removing the principal motive that leads them into the raiding.²

How should a woman behave if threatened with violation? And what would be the duty of the satyagrahi in whose presence the assault took place? These questions have been put to Gandhiji scores of times. Women, he believes, make even better satyagrahis than men, because they have greater courage of the right type and immeasurably greater spirit of self-sacrifice.

But the way of satyagraha is only for the woman who acquires the requisite self-control and lives a simple, natural life. To be non-violent she has to avoid the modern craze of dressing to attract attention and improving upon nature by painting herself and looking extra-ordinary.³ If she

1. *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 215.

2. *H.*, Oct. 22, 1938, p. 304 ; Oct. 29, 1938, p. 310 ; Nov. 5, 1938, p. 314 ; Jan. 28, 1939, p. 448 ; July 13, 1940, p. 208 ; *Y.J.*, I, pp. 719-23.

3. *H.*, Dec. 31, 1938, p. 499.

tries to be Juliet to half a dozen Romeos, she cannot develop the non-violent spirit in her.

If a woman thus revolutionizes her way of thinking and living, she will find that purity is the best strength. Gandhiji believes that "The veriest ruffian becomes for the time being tame in the presence of resplendent purity." He also holds that ". . . it is physically impossible to violate a woman against her will. The outrage takes place only when she gives way to fear or does not realise her moral strength."² Her purity makes her conscious of her strength. If per chance she finds herself in danger, she should resist the lust of the assailant even to the extent of immolating herself. Even if gagged or bound, the resolute will would give her the strength to die.³ Similarly the satyagrahi relation or friend of such a woman should stand between the assailant and his intended victim. He should then either dissuade the assailant from his wicked purpose or face death.

This method of defence by soul-force is far superior to armed resistance. It will, in all probability, exhaust the assailant's passion and awaken his soul. It will very likely steel the heart of the victim to put an equally brave defence. Besides, death in non-violent defence will not make the position even worse as defeat in armed resistance will do. Defeat or death in armed resistance, instead of stilling the fury or violence, feeds it by counter-violence. Even if the woman and her defender die in the effort, it will be glorious death, for they will have done their duty.⁴

But this truly non-violent treatment of the criminal is not possible unless it springs from a sincere belief that the criminal and the satyagrahi are one and, therefore, it is better that the latter die at the hands of the former than that the ignorant criminal should die at the hands of the satyagrahi.⁵

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 862.

2. *H.*, Sept. 1, 1940, p. 266.

3. *H.*, Dec. 31, 1938, pp. 408-9 ; *Y.I.*, II, pp. 861-2.

4. *Speeches*, pp. 385, 838-39 ; *H.*, Nov. 19, 1938, p. 344 ; *H.*, Sept. 1, 1940, p. 266.

5. *H.*, June 29, 1940, p. 184.

To a Negro visitor's question as to how one should act if one's brother was lynched, Gandhiji replied as under :

" . . . I must not wish ill to these . . . It may be that ordinarily I depend on the lynching community for my livelihood. I refuse to co-operate with them, refuse even to touch the food that comes from them, and I refuse to co-operate with even my brother Negroes who tolerate the wrong. That is the self-immolation I mean. Of course a mechanical act of starvation means nothing. One's faith must remain undimmed whilst life ebbs out minute by minute."¹

It is unnecessary to give hypothetical cases and discuss how to deal with them, or even to refer to actual instances in the life of Gandhiji and others. Non-violence is the law of love, i.e., voluntary suffering and sacrifice of the highest type. It will not be difficult to know how exactly to act in a particular situation provided we are non-violent through and through. Says Gandhiji, "I know that when we have real non-violence in us a non-violent way out is bound, without effort, to occur to us when we find ourselves in a difficult situation."² The sign that one has developed real non-violence is that there must be within him an upwelling of love and pity towards the wrong-doer. "When there is that feeling it will express itself through some action. It may be a sign, a glance, even silence. But such, as it is, will melt the heart of the wrong-doer and check the wrong."³

But one does not become non-violent overnight for the mere wishing. The highest form of *ahimsa* presumes a thoughtful training spread over a fairly long period. What is one to do before one has developed the courage of dying without killing? There may also be people who accept *ahimsa* only as a political expedient. What should be the attitude of such persons in face of danger to honour, life and property?

1. *H.*, March 19, 1936, p. 39.

2. *H.*, Feb. 17, 1940, p. 8.

3. *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

In 1922 Gandhiji saw nothing wrong in satyagrahis using violence in self-defence.¹ Indeed, he did not ask them to eschew violence in dealing with robbers or thieves or with nations that might invade India.² The Gaya Congress passed a resolution permitting the Congress satyagrahis the use of force in self-defence. But now he does not countenance the "non-violence of the weak." To those, however, who have not yet learnt the superior method of non-violent self-defence, he advises the use of force in self-defence, i.e. killing and being killed rather than shamefully fleeing from danger. In chapter III we have discussed why Gandhiji prefers violence where the only alternative is cowardice. On many occasions his advice to individuals and groups has been that, if they are incapable of non-violent defence, i.e., self-immolation, and are face to face with opponents bent on ruining their life, property, self-respect or honour, they should, rather than submit to the wrong, use physical strength, if necessary, to the point of killing the wrong-doer. This is the advice he generally gives to people in cases of police excesses and communal riots. Thus to the villagers of Bethiah (1920) and Champaran (1921) and to the Hindus of Andhra (1935), Sindh (1940) and Noakhali he recommended the use of violence in self-defence rather than getting panicky. In fact, he considers it the condition of democracy that every citizen should know the art of self-defence.³ For if citizens cannot stake their lives to defend their own self-respect, they would be far less ready to stake it for the defence of democracy against internal and external dangers.

Gandhiji also believes that spontaneous violent resistance offered against overwhelming might in the full knowledge that it means certain death is almost non-violent.⁴ Thus, if a man fights with his sword single-handed against a horde of dacoits armed to the teeth, or if a woman uses her nails

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 1075 ; *Speeches*, p. 719.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 31.

3. *H.*, Feb. 10, 1940, p. 446.

4. *H.*, Sept. 8, 1940, p. 274.

and teeth in defence of her honour, the conduct would be almost non-violent.¹

There would, however, be no occasion for violent self-defence when police aid is available.² Besides, when force is used it should not be more than needed on the occasion. "It is invariably a sign of cowardice and madness to use excessive force. A brave man does not kill a thief but arrests him and hands him over to the police. A braver man uses just enough force to drive him out and thinks no more about it." Of course, the bravest man is he who can deal with the criminal non-violently.

The methods discussed in this chapter have their risks and uncertainties due to weakness and imperfections of satyagrahis. Thus individual satyagraha may become *duragraha* in two ways. Suffering may be coercive and violent from the very start. It may be for stage effect or for some other unworthy object. In such a case the resister will lack the moral strength that truth alone gives and will in all probability not be able to persevere for long. Another possibility is that the opponent, instead of being converted, may be compelled to yield against his reason because he has not the strength to stand hostile public opinion or the sight of suffering. And the dearer the satyagrahi to the opponent, the greater is this risk. Gandhiji himself writes referring to non-co-operation, "Its abuse is the greatest in domestic relations because those against whom it is used are not strong enough to resist the abuse. It becomes a case of misapplied affection. Doting parents or wives are the greatest victims. These will learn wisdom when they realise that affection does not demand yielding to extortion in any form. On the contrary true affection will resist it."³ Still another possibility is that the satyagrahi may tire of his suffering.

But every human device is liable to misuse. Satyagraha as the way of life should be judged by its net results. It

1. *H.*, August 25, 1940, p. 261.

2. *H.*, July 20, 1935, p. 181.

3. *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 133.

should be borne in mind that efforts to eliminate violence from personal life form an inevitable first step to the establishment of genuine democracy and real world peace and to the successful use of non-violent direct action on mass scale. Besides, non-violence gives to the individual character and strength. It is an invaluable discipline for acquiring self-mastery or personal *swaraj*. As Gandhiji puts it, “. . . A perfect satyagrahi has to be almost, if not entirely, a perfect man. Thus viewed Satyagraha is the noblest and the best education . . . the greater the spirit of Satyagraha in us the better men we will become . . . it is a force which, if it become universal, would revolutionize social ideals . . .”¹

Violence always leads to counter-violence and cannot be a lasting solution of the conflict. The defeated nurses the grudge and waits for a suitable opportunity to wreak vengeance. Abundant evidence is available as a result of the researches of modern Medicine, Biology, Physiology and Psychology that divisive emotions, the chief of which are fear and anger, have become inefficient and harmful due to social evolution and cause predisposition to disease.² Violence thus creates greater evils than it seeks to cure. It arouses the beastliest passions of man and leads on from injustice to injustice.

Non-violence which seeks to sublimate these divisive propensities into creative channels is of great hygienic, physiological and psychological value both to the satyagrahi and to his opponent. It raises the conflict from the destructive physical to the constructive moral level. Suffering love paralyses mere physical force, conciliates the opponent and leads to a settlement satisfactory to both the sides and in keeping with their self-respect. Rightly does Gandhiji call satyagraha an all-sided sword ; for “it can be used anyhow ; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used.”³ It is available to either side in the conflict and

1. *V.I.*, III, p. 445.

2. See pp. 77-8 *supra*.

3. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 72.

will vindicate truth and justice on whichever side they are in a preponderating measure.¹ It thus carries its own automatic check against misuse. What will happen, it may be asked, if two satyagrahis differ on a vital problem? Most probably satyagraha would not reach the stage of suffering, the differences being resolved at the preliminary stage of persuasion. In any case truth will prevail in the end.

On the whole, the destructive method of violence is no substitute for satyagraha. The latter may work slow, but it does settle the conflict and establish the right even as the former perpetuates antagonisms and, often enough, establishes the wrong.

It has been suggested that non-violence is, so far as theoretical merits are concerned, the most just and powerful weapon conceivable in human affairs. In actual practice, however, it is too idealistic and exacting to accomplish the every day work of the world, as it "demands a stronger self-control, a more enduring solidarity of purpose, a greater capacity for passive suffering, a higher ethical development than most human beings have thus far attained."² This is an opinion very widely held by people in India as well as outside.

Gandhiji, however, holds that "The weapon of *ahimsa* does not require super-men and super-women to wield it, beings of common clay can use and have used it before this with success."³ It does presume a moral discipline, but this discipline, as we have discussed in chapter V, is practicable. Besides, once the desirability of satyagraha is conceded, it is too late in the day to take one's stand on imperfections of human nature. Few will question the enormous malleability of man. Revolutions bear testimony to the great plasticity of human nature. The long list of evils like slavery, human sacrifice, infanticide, etc., which were once considered irremovable due to imperfections of human nature and have now disappeared, should convince the sceptics. If Fascist countries can train people *en masse* to regard war

1. *Y.J.*, I, p. 52.

2. C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, pp. 406-7.

3. *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 198.

as good in itself, surely peace-loving nations can with equal, or even greater effort educate people in the way of peace.¹ Perhaps it may take a very long time to convince people and to induce them to change their outlook, but time is not of the essence. What matters is conviction and sincere efforts in the correct direction. If just a few persons actually begin to live non-violently, the non-violent way will spread among the masses. Every possible means, it is true, should be explored and utilized. Efforts should be made to reconstruct the entire structure of society. Gandhiji attaches very great importance to the elementary training of children in satyagraha preceding literary education.² He believes that even before literary education the child should be taught what soul is, what truth is, what love is and how in the struggle of life it can easily conquer hate by love, untruth by truth and violence by self-suffering.³ In the scheme of basic education he has tried to give a non-violent bias to the system of education.

Though Gandhiji does not neglect the social approach, the first step is the transparently non-violent lives of those convinced, however small their numbers. Thus in 1936 when asked by Dr Thurman as to how to train individuals and communities in this art, Gandhiji replied, "There is no royal road, except through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon. Of course the expression in one's life

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1. K. Mannheim holds that "... it costs social organisation at least as much energy deliberately to build up warlike attitude as peaceful ones." See his *Man and Society*, ch. on *Possibilities of Change in Human Nature*. G. M. Stratton's conclusion is that both violence and co-operation are alike natural; that nature leaves undetermined the special acts by which the two kinds of impulse shall be carried out; that the malleable violent and co-operative activities are shaped and finished by social needs and purposes; and that common life requires that co-operation be steadied and extended and that violence which obstructs co-operation be prevented from disrupting or impeding it. See *Violence between Nations and Violence within the Nation* in *Psychological Review*, 1944, 51, pp. 85-101 and 147-61. R. D. Gillespie refers to the nation-wide accentuations of aggressive traits of the German people produced by Hitler and the Nazis in less than two decades and observes, "It is possible to hope that changes of a henceficial kind may also be produced in a much shorter time than we had dared to expect." *Psychological Effects of War on Citizen and Soldier*, p. 226.
 2. C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 200.
 3. *Y.I.*, III, p. 445.

presumes great study, tremendous perseverance, and thorough cleansing of one's self of all the impurities."¹

In theory, no doubt, Gandhiji is an absolutist, that is, his non-violence does not stop at man but reaches out to the tiniest creature living, and he believes that, ideally speaking, every situation of life can be dealt with non-violently. "A fully non-violent person is by nature incapable of using violence or rather has no use for it. His non-violence is all-sufficing under all circumstances."² In actual practice, he is far from strict and makes ample concessions to demands of human weakness. He concedes *himsa* as unavoidable in certain conditions. Unlike Tolstoy, the Quakers and many other pacifist Christian sects, he permits the satyagrahi even to kill in certain situations. He believes that every individual should determine for himself how far he is willing to go in the practice of *ahimsa*. He prefers violence to cowardice and slavery and advises people to fight like sportsmen rather than run away in craven fear. Thus, in spite of being an absolutist in theory, Gandhiji does retain a minimum of coercion indispensable for individual life and social cohesion.³

CHAPTER VIII

SATYAGRAHA AS CORPORATE ACTION⁴

THE LEADER, ORGANISATION AND PROPAGANDA

"Non-violence", Gandhiji once remarked, "is not an individual virtue but a course of spiritual and political conduct both for the individual and the community."⁵ Group conflicts, like conflicts in dyadic relations, are due to the relative nature of truth as known to man as well as human

1. *H.*, March 14, 1936, p. 39.

2. *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

3. For details see chapters III, V and XI.

4. Gandhiji often terms satyagraha on group-scale as corporate non-violence.

5. *H.*, Sept. 29, 1940, p. 299.

imperfections. In group relations, even more than in individual life, conflicts and violence have become chronic today and threaten the very existence of civilized life. In satyagraha Gandhiji has given to the world a technique for fighting, in a creative, constructive way, aggression and exploitation in inter-group and international relations.

Satyagraha as corporate action raises complicated questions of leadership, organisation, discipline, training and strategy. Satyagraha is essentially a matter of quality rather than quantity and its use even in group affairs would not be difficult, if there could be found a few or even one perfect satyagrahi. One perfect satyagrahi, Gandhiji has repeatedly said, is enough to win the battle of right against wrong. He can "defy the whole might of an unjust empire. . . . and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or regeneration."¹ "Complete non-violence . . . does not stand in need of organised strength. A man or woman who is saturated with *ahimsa* has only to will a thing and it happens."² This belief of Gandhiji follows from his views about the limitless potency of soul-force. But such perfection, such marvellous control over thought and will is not possible for man. Even if it were possible, its greatest utility would be as an instrument of educating the masses into satyagraha.³ For ". . . it is essential that desired results are achieved by the collective effort of the people. It will no doubt be good to achieve an objective through the effort of a supremely powerful individual, but it can never make the community conscious of its corporate strength."⁴ As it is, mass movements are essential, and with patience and perseverance masses have to be organized and disciplined for the use of collective non-violent technique.

The leader is the very soul of mass satyagraha. Great movements need great leaders for the psychological reason that most people find it easier to think in terms of personalities than of ideas. They crave a personal leader even as

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1. *Y.I.*, I, p. 262. -
 2. *H.*, August 18, 1940, p. 253.
 3. *Sarvodaya* (Hindi), April 1940, p. 426.
 4. *H.*, Sept. 8, 1940, p. 277.

they need a personal God.¹ A personal leader is even a greater necessity in satyagraha than in other great movements. For it is only by the impact of the dynamic personality of the leader, truth and non-violence in flesh and blood, that ordinary human material can rise to the level of ethical excellence necessary for the practice of mass satyagraha.

The satyagrahi leader will try to live up to all the implications of truth and non-violence. His transparent sincerity and all-embracing love, culture and dignified bearing will win the devoted affection and the unquestioning obedience of his followers, disarm all opposition and endear him even to his adversary. His control over all the senses will give him creative energy of the highest order. It will give power to his word and make his controlled thought self-acting.² His complete selflessness born of the pursuit of non-possession will make him proof against self-seeking opportunism and enable him to feel one with the humblest camp-follower. Firmly rooted in the soil of his country and saturated with the spirit of *swadeshi*, he will represent the best in the culture and tradition of his people. His faith in God and his clear grasp of the basic moral laws will make him a matchless general and an unfailing strategist.

The leader prepares the masses for the use of satyagraha in the sense of direct action as well as in its constructive aspect. The sure test of his success is that satyagrahis working under him should take as much interest in the arduous and exacting task of constructive activities as in the spectacular aspect of direct action and should be able to change from the one to the other with ease and effectiveness. The greatest tribute to the success of the satyagrahi leader would be for some of his followers to excel him in non-violence.³

A leader like Gandhiji asserts himself by sheer moral force. But for training sub-leaders and workers the best means is an ancient Indian institution, the *ashrama*.⁴

1. G. D. H. and Margaret Cole, *A Guide to Modern Politics*, pp. 348-49.

2. *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192.

3. *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 210.

4. In ancient India *ashramas* were forest retreats where seers and sages preached and practised the ways of self-realisation.

Here due to the constant living contact between the teacher and the taught over a long period in the ideal atmosphere the message of non-violence is indelibly stamped on the very soul of the inmates. In the common life of the *ashrama* the leader and his disciples cultivate non-violent virtues. The way the leader lives and deals with the day to day problems of the institution is a concrete, living lesson in satyagraha that no more written or spoken word will ever supplant. *Ashramas* thus become the vital nerve centres of the non-violent movement and the nuclei of the new social order. Through them the message of non-violence filters down to the masses. *Ashramas* also serve as research institutions for the discovery of new applications of non-violence.

Since the discovery of satyagraha Gandhiji has been fixing up his abode in *ashramas*, pursuing his *sadhana* there and drawing his inspiration from the natural setting of his surroundings.¹ There has also grown up a large number of satyagraha *ashramas* in various parts of India. These are in most cases run by Gandhiji's disciples and have been modelled after the Sabarmati Ashrama which was disbanded by Gandhiji in 1933.

A satyagraha mass movement requires not only the leader, his co-workers and lieutenants but also an enduring organization. Gandhiji has tried to mould the Indian National Congress according to the requirements of satyagraha. But the Congress is not what he would like it to be. We may briefly study how far the Congress falls short of the ideal non-violent organisation of Gandhiji's conception.

Before Gandhiji's entry into Indian politics the Congress was an organization of upper middle class leaders with little contact with the masses. It met once a year in some big town and its politics ranged between resolutions and deputations of prayers and protests. It was thus mainly a deliberative organisation concerned with the formation of opinion rather than with action. Gandhiji has transformed the Congress into a revolutionary mass organization.

1. Mahadeo Desai's article, *How Does Mr Gandhi Live?*, *Illustrated Weekly of India*, March 31, 1940.

Under his leadership the object of the Congress has been to identify itself with the masses, to educate and discipline them and to fight non-violently for their rights. According to him, the means of a non-violent organization should be truthful and non-violent. But, in spite of his repeated pleading, the Congress has stuck to the adjectives 'peaceful' instead of 'non-violent' and 'legitimate' in place of 'truthful'. With Gandhiji non-violence has always been a creed and not a mere policy. In 1919 under Gandhiji's advice the Congress accepted non-violence as a policy only, i.e., for the restricted purpose of winning *swaraj* and regulating relations between various religious and social groups in the country. He had hoped that many would accept non-violence as their creed after they had watched its working.¹ But, though he preached non-violence as a policy, he insisted that "even policies require honest adherence in thought, word and deed . . . Non-violence being a policy means that it can upon due notice be given up when it proves unsuccessful or ineffective. But simple morality demands that, whilst a particular policy is pursued, it must be pursued with all one's heart."² He said, "Our non-violence need not be of the strong but it has to be of the truthful."³

In 1933 Gandhiji came to be convinced that non-violence to be effective should be accepted not as a halting measure of expediency but as a comprehensive principle. The Congress, however, continued to lag behind Gandhiji's standard. The difference came to a head in 1940 due to the present war. By its Delhi and Poona resolutions (July 7th and 27th, 1940) the Congress absolved Gandhiji of his leadership and promised, contrary to its past professions of non-violence, to Britain its active co-operation in the war effort in case Britain recognised India's independence. But its offer was rejected. Thereupon, by its Bombay resolution (16th Sept. 1940) the Congress once again accepted Gandhiji's leadership and pledged itself to "the policy and prac-

1. *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192 ; June 24, 1939, p. 175.

2. *Y.I.*, I, pp. 282-3.

3. *Y.I.*, I, p. 288.

In the Congress organization Gandhiji welcomes the existence of groups as well as well-informed and balanced criticism which he considers to be the "ozone of public life."² The various groups within this organization, he holds, should be knit together by their common devotion to truth and non-violence. They should not be irreconcilables, and their differences should concern neither the end nor the means but the details of means employed on a particular occasion.

Decision in a non-violent organization should be taken in the democratic way, and the opinion of the majority should count. Gandhiji, however, does not accept the logic of counting heads and forcing big minorities on important questions. Non-violence requires that minorities should be treated with all consideration and rules out the tyranny of the majority. Thus in regard to the Congress he writes, "I have always held that when a respectable minority objects to any rule of conduct, it would be dignified for the majority. . . to yield to the minority. Numerical strength savours of violence when it acts in total disregard of any strongly felt opinion of a minority. The rule of the majority is perfectly sound, only when there is no rigid insistence on the part of dissenters upon their dissent, and where there is on their behalf a sportsmanlike obedience to the opinion of the majority."³ But this does not mean the divine right of the minority to *liberum veto*. "Where there is no principle

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1. The A.I.C.C. resolution, Sept. 16, 1940. *H.*, Sept. 22, 1940, p. 296. Gandhiji's reply to *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, dated July 15, 1943.
 2. *H.*, Nov. 13, 1937, p. 33.
 3. *Y.I.*, III, p. 212.

involved and there is a programme to be carried out the minority has got to follow the majority.”¹

Thus ordinarily the policy should be decided by the majority vote, but the dissent of the minority should be reckoned with when the question voted upon is one of principle.²

As for a non-violent minority group, it should render perfect co-operation and willing obedience to the organization. But if it does not believe in the basic principles of the organization, it should withdraw from it and try to convert people to its view by patient service and sacrifice. Even when it withdraws, it should continue to co-operate with the majority wherever possible. Remaining in the group and yet pursuing a policy of opposition and obstruction offends against the spirit of satyagraha. Thus Gandhiji wrote in 1922, “If we are going to evolve the real spirit of democracy, we shall not do so by obstruction but by abstention.” Mere obstruction is negative and destructive and aims at capturing power by embarrassment and manoeuvring while non-violence is positive and constructive and aims at conversion through service.

On the occasion of elections or voting, the various groups in the organization may adopt all honest means for influencing voters, but undue pressure should not be exercised and there should be no criticism of the opposite groups as distinguished from their policy.⁴ In 1924 when there was a tussle in the Congress between the Swarajists and the No-changers, Gandhiji advised the latter not to be party-men. He remarked, “Wherever No-changers cannot have a majority without a bitter struggle, they must gladly and willingly and gracefully yield to the Swarajists. If they have power or office, it must be by virtue of service, not by manipulation of the vote. The vote is there no doubt. But it must come,

1. *H.* August 11, 1940, p. 244.

2. *Y.I.*, I, p. 1017.

3. *Y.I.*, II, p. 345.

4. *Y.I.*, II, p. 885.

without the asking.”¹ Thus there should be no room, in a non-violent organisation, for power-politics, for manœuvring for the capture of party-machinery or retaining hold over it.

In this respect also the Congress has often lagged behind Gandhiji’s ideal. In recent years the compactness and the homogeneity of the Congress have been unduly strained by the rise of groups which have no faith in the creed and the constructive programme of the Congress. Their presence in the Congress, in spite of these differences, is due to the fact that association with the Congress lends strength to their appeal to the masses. These groups often follow the obstructionist policy, and Gandhiji once expressed the opinion that if these groups did not yield to persuasion the best course for the majority was to hand over the Congress machinery to them and work the Congress programme without using the Congress name.²

The Congress has failed to rise equal to Gandhiji’s expectations in regard to membership also, for it has often attached importance to vastness at the cost of depth. Gandhiji has always believed that internal corruption in the Congress has been an important cause of the failure of satyagraha. “Stubborn and implacable resistance against internal corruption,” he wrote as early as 1922, “is enough resistance against the Government.”³ For about three years before the anti-war satyagraha of 1940-41 corruption in the Congress organisation had been the burden of many of Gandhiji’s speeches and articles. When the Congress accepted office in the provinces, many of the risks associated with its membership disappeared. Consequently many undesirables entered the Congress to exploit the influence and power that had accrued to it. There began an unholy scramble for its elective posts. Membership registers were disfigured by false entries. Even violence was resorted to at the time of party elections. In the excitement of legislative activity the constructive programme was neglected, and discipline became lax. The

1. *Y. I.*, II, p. 885.

2. *H.* Oct. 15, 1938, p. 287.

3. *Y.I.*, I. p. 264.

Congress had, therefore, to take stern action against corruption and indiscipline. Withdrawal of the Congress from the work of administration and the launching of direct action in 1940 resulted in a large measure of clean-up, and by the beginning of 1942 once again it became a strong organisation.

The Congress works in a two-fold capacity. It has got some peace functions which relate to its internal growth and administration. For these it is as good a democratic organisation as any to be found in the world. But for twenty-five years the Congress has been engaged in a life and death struggle with the mighty British Empire. Thus the Congress is also a fighting organisation, a non-violent army. War, even war without violence, seriously impairs democracy. For in time of war the ordinary democratic processes of persuasion, discussion and counting of votes have to be subordinated to the demands of quick action, discipline and unity of command.

The Congress continues to work as an army even during the suspension of civil disobedience. For the suspension of civil disobedience does not mean suspension of war. As a fighting machine the Congress "has to centralize control and guide every department and every congressman, however highly placed, and expect unquestioned obedience."¹ "The central authority possesses plenary powers enabling it to impose and enforce discipline on the various units working under it."²

During civil disobedience, according to Gandhiji, the will of the Congress is expressed by its general whoever he may be. "Every unit has to tender him willing obedience in thought, word and deed. Yes, even in thought, since the fight is non-violent."²

Thus whenever the Congress declared "war" against the Government, it invested Gandhiji with full powers of a dictator. In 1930 Gandhiji gave an important reason why non-violent direct action should not be controlled by a democratic organisation like the Congress. The Congress

1. *H.*, Aug. 6, 1938, p. 209.

2. *H.*, Nov. 18, 1939, p. 344.

consisted of people of a variety of mentalities. To some non-violence was a matter of policy and expediency to others a creed. "The instinct of those, therefore, with whom non-violence is a policy, when tempted by violence, may fail them. That of those who have no remedy but non-violence open to them can never fail them if they have non-violence in them in reality. Hence the necessity for freedom from Congress control."¹

But this is dictatorship only in name. It lasts only for the duration of civil disobedience. It is democratic in origin, for it is voluntarily adopted by the Congress. Further, the obedience of the rank and file is entirely voluntary and can be withdrawn at their will. Besides, as the movement of civil dis-obedience develops important leaders are imprisoned, and the Congress is declared illegal. Congress committees cease to function and delegate their powers to local dictators. The movement then becomes decentralized and self-regulated. In fact, Gandhiji expects leadership to be so thoroughly decentralized that every satyagrahi should be both chief and follower.² In a revolutionary movement a more democratic arrangement is hardly possible.

Thus the Congress combines effective leadership, concentration of power and fighting efficiency with democracy. When the Congress ruled in the provinces those who had accepted office under the State were, under Gandhiji's advice, excluded from executive bodies of the Congress, the object being to safeguard the internal democracy of the organisation.

This dictatorship, just because it is dictatorship, may be mistaken for being Fascistic. But the two are poles apart. Fascism is based on violence. The Congress, on the other hand, is a non-violent organisation. It does not impose its will on others and has only moral sanctions. Thus as the only purely non-violent organisation of importance in the world the Congress is the very antithesis of Fascism. The smallest minority group in the Congress can resist the unjust majority non-violently and thus safeguard its rights.

1. *Y.I.*, Feb. 2, 1930.

2. *History of the Congress*, p. 657.

That the Congress does not believe in "Leadership" is amply borne out by Gandhiji's repeated withdrawal from the Congress. In July 1940 the Congress went so far as to absolve him of his leadership. Gandhiji's influence over the Congress, which is often exaggerated, is purely moral. "My opinion", he says, "prevails only to the extent that I carry conviction. Let me give out the secret that often my advice makes no appeal to the members."¹

One reason why the Congress is sometimes mistaken for being Fascistic is the discipline that it tries to maintain. We have explained why the Congress had in recent years so frequently to resort to disciplinary action against recalcitrants in order to root out corruption and indiscipline. After all the existence of even a voluntary organisation presumes a minimum of allegiance to common principles and modes of action.

Though only a part of India's population is represented on the Congress register, it claims, by the right of service, to speak for and aspires to represent the entire nation. In the past it also aimed at being an all-inclusive organisation. But this was due to its being the spearhead of Indian nationalism, a kind of national front. As Gandhiji once remarked, "Absorption is inevitable when a country is engaged in a struggle to wrest power from foreign hands ; it cannot afford to have separate rival political organisations. The entire strength of the country must be used for ousting the third and usurping party."²

The Congress has its defects and failings. But it is, in the words of Gandhiji, "the only organisation, however imperfect, however wanting in faith as an organisation, still the only organisation that stands defiantly for peaceful measures."³ No other organisation has practised non-violent resistance on such a large scale. Nowhere else do we find a dictatorship so democratic in character, origin and working.

Gandhiji has tried to mould the structure of the Congress so as to make it a democratic revolutionary organisation and

1. *H.*, Aug. 12, 1939, p. 232.

2. *H.*, Dec. 31, 1938, p. 410.

3. Gandhiji's statement dated April 21, 1941.

to bring within its orbit of service and influence the 7,00,000 of India's villages. He believes that it has progressed from stage to stage in its march towards democracy in the truest sense of the term.

In his conception of democracy Gandhiji is not obsessed with large, unwieldy numbers that make for corruption and hypocrisy. As he wrote in 1934, "True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent."¹ Let not "the claim to represent" sound undemocratic. In a non-violent organisation, which depends on voluntary obedience and moral sanctions, the "claim to represent" means no more than the right to serve and to suffer for the common good. If Gandhiji had his way, "the Congress would be reduced to the smallest compass possible. It would consist of a few chosen servants removable at the will of the nation but getting the willing co-operation of the millions in the programme they may put before the nation."²

In 1920 he gave to the Congress a new constitution. This constitution, as amended by Gandhiji's Bombay resolutions (1934) and by the All India Congress Committee in July, 1939, determines the structure of the Congress.

According to this constitution the Indian National Congress comprises :

- (1) Primary member enrolled in the Congress Committees and paying annas four annually ;
- (2) Village, Ward, Town, Thana, Mandal, Tahsil, Sub-division and District Committees ;
- (3) Provincial Congress Committees ;
- (4) Annual Session of the Congress consisting of the President of the Congress and the delegates for the year ;
- (5) All India Congress Committee ; and
- (6) Working Committee.

The delegates are elected by the primary members, each district being entitled to elect one delegate for each lac of

1. Gandhiji's statement dated Sep. 17, 1934.

2. *H.*, Aug. 12, 1939, p. 232.

its population, provided that for every delegate to be elected there are not less than 500 primary members enrolled during the year.

The delegates of a province form the Provincial Congress Committee. They elect from among themselves one-eighth of their number, as representatives of the province, to the All-India Congress Committee. In the presidential election held every year the right of vote belongs to delegates only. The Working Committee consists of the President and thirteen members appointed by the President from amongst the members of the All India Congress Committee. The Working Committee is the executive authority of the Congress and carries into effect the policy laid down by the A.I.C.C. to which it is responsible.

Before its suppression in August 1942 the Congress had several auxiliary organisations. Two of these, i.e., its permanent secretariat at Allahabad and the Parliamentary Board are not yet functioning. The Gandhi Sewa Sangh, a body of nine satyagraha experts, is a research organisation for exploring the possibilities of *ahimsa* in all walks of life, particularly for "the observation, study and research in the subject of relation of constructive work to *ahimsa* and of reaction of such work on individual and society."¹ The Sangh works under Gandhiji's guidance and is independent of the Congress. The constructive work has its own independent institutions of experts, functioning under Gandhiji's guidance. These institutions are the All India Spinners' Association, the Harijan Sewak Sangh, the All India Village Industries Association, the Hindustani Talimi Sangh and the Gosewa Sangh. Recently a Co-ordination Committee (Sammiliti Samiti) has been formed of five members representing the five constructive organisations which owe allegiance to Gandhiji's philosophy. The Committee which is an advisory body will work under the guidance of Gandhiji. Its main function is to act as a watch and ward committee in regard to constructive work and point out deviations from the principles

1. The resolution of the Gandhi Sewa Sangha, 1940 session. *H.*, March 2, 1940, p. 24.

of non-violence. It will also guide and co-ordinate the activities of these organisations with a view to raise the level of village life.

The Congress has also its volunteer organisation, now named Qaumi Sewa Dal. It has its periodical rallies and training camps, its drill, uniform and national songs. Volunteers, Gandhiji has always insisted, should be recruited with discrimination. In order to keep out all but men of sterling character volunteers are required to sign a pledge and accept the non-violent discipline.

Gandhiji holds that poor volunteers, devoting all their time to national service, should accept a minimum allowance for their maintenance.¹ During 1935-36 he asked the volunteers carrying on village work to depend for their minimum requirements on the villages they served, though the ideal of bread-labour requires that one should be able to earn for one's own needs and devote one's spare time to national service.² Dependence of a village worker on the village he serves is a sign that his service is acceptable to the village and that the latter reposes its confidence in him and is ready to meet his legitimate needs. Recently with Gandhiji's approval the A.I.S.A. decided that in view of the war-time high price-level a worker engaging in the all-round village service (*samagra gramsewa*) should be paid upto rupees one hundred as monthly allowance according to the size of his family. This allowance will be reduced by twenty per cent per *annum*. At the end of five years the worker will become self-supporting and will depend for his maintenance on the support of the village, his own physical labour and the modest savings from village industries started by him in the area.

The function of volunteers is to train the masses for satyagraha. In times of direct action they form the vanguard of the non-violent forces and give tone and discipline to raw recruits. In peace time they serve the masses by carrying on constructive activities. They also

1. *Y.J.*, II, p. 442.

2. *H.*, June 1, 1935, pp. 122 and 125 ; Nov. 12, 1935, p. 302 and Feb. 29, 1936, p. 18.

organise and regulate meetings, processions and *hartals* (suspension of business).¹

As village workers their duty is to universalize *khadi* and to reconstruct the village on the basis of a handicraft civilisation. This is how Gandhiji describes an ideal satyagrahi acting as a village worker :

“He would be bound with the poorest in the village by ties of service. He would constitute himself the scavenger, the nurse, the arbiter of disputes and the teacher of the children of the village . . . His house will be a busy hive of useful activities centring round spinning.”²

In 1938 Gandhiji advocated the enlistment of volunteers for the formation of local peace brigades to deal with communal riots. These volunteers must be out and out *ahimsaists* and have a living faith in God and equal regard for all the principal religions of the world. They must belong to the locality and develop contacts with the people in the locality through personal, constructive service. Gandhiji's idea was that the brigades should take the place of the police and the military to deal peacefully with communal disturbances.³ The peace brigade programme, he said, was “a programme of courting death in preventing Hindu-Muslim clashes and the like. It is a programme of dying to prevent violence.”⁴

At Gandhiji's suggestion efforts were made after 1938 to organise peace brigades in some parts of the country. The Shanti Sewak Sangh of Ahmedabad had at one time about 150 members and did much to establish communal peace there. The peace that these brigades aimed at was not a peace superimposed by authority but a peace of conviction secured through service and understanding.

By far the most important section of India's non-violent army consists of Khudai Khidmatgars or Surkh-posh (Red-shirts).

The founder of the Red-shirt movement is Khan Abdul

1. *Y.I.*, pp. 1145-6.

2. *H.*, Aug. 4, 1940, p. 235.

3. *H.*, June 18, 1938, p. 152.

4. *H.*, Oct. 21, 1939, p. 310.

Ghaffar Khan.¹ Twenty-five years back in response to Gandhiji's call to the nation to protest against the Rowlatt Bill the Khan Saheb started the Red-shirt movement outside the Congress. During the last fifteen years the movement came closer and closer to the Congress and the two have coalesced now.

The Red-shirts number over one lac. They get no monetary allowance and have to provide their own uniform. They receive training in semi-military drill and are much better disciplined than volunteers in other parts of India. During the non-violent movement of 1930-33 nowhere was repression more severe and ruthless than in the Frontier Province and nowhere did the satyagrahis meet it more bravely and non-violently.

As is well known, Gandhiji attaches very great importance to the Red-shirt movement. Apart from the numbers and the past record, this movement is an experiment in the non-violence of the brave.² The people of the Frontier are among the most ferocious and warlike people of the world. Violence and revenge are the very breath of their being.³ *Badal* (revenge) forms a vital part of the Pathan code of honour. Every Pathan, it is said, counts his murders and remembers his foes. If non-violence of the brave can be successfully developed even by these Pathans, it will be conclusive evidence that non-violence can be cultivated by all peoples irrespective of their past tradition.

As yet the Red-shirts fall short of Gandhiji's ideal and have, until recently, confined themselves to the political aspect of non-violence. But Gandhiji is hopeful that the Pathans, under their gifted leader, will be able to evolve true non-violence. In 1938 in collaboration with their leader,

1. None among Gandhiji's co-workers have perhaps accepted non-violence in a more comprehensive sense than the Khan. In 1940 when the Working Committee of the Congress offered conditionally to assist Britain in the war he resigned his membership of that body on the ground that he and his Red-shirts stood for the non-violence of the brave.
2. *H.*, Aug. 28, 1940, p. 224.
3. The Khan Saheb holds that non-violence has appreciably diminished the blood-feuds of the Pathans and made them even more courageous. *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 213.

Gandhiji worked out a plan for the reorientation of the movement. In particular he recommended that, for non-violence to become a living thing, the Khudai Khidmatgars should go through a rigorous training in constructive activities.¹

Gandhiji has devoted much thought to the problem of the discipline of satyagrahi soldiers. He believes that the success of non-violent direct action depends on adequate discipline.

The aim of discipline is to develop, in the satyagrahi soldier, non-violence, soul-force or moral force, i.e., to help him to realize, in a concrete way, his moral and spiritual unity with all.² This requires cultivation of the spirit of the service, sacrifice and renunciation. The best means to develop discipline in the rank and file of the satyagrahi forces is organised constructive work.

In 1921 Gandhiji drew up a pledge laying down the discipline required of every satyagrahi volunteer. In 1930 he laid down a set of 19 rules. We give as an appendix to this chapter both the pledge and the rules. In 1939 Gandhiji briefly stated the qualifications of a satyagrahi thus :³

1. He must have a living faith in God.
2. He must believe in truth and non-violence as his creed and, therefore, have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature which he expects to evoke by his truth and love expressed through his suffering.
3. He must be leading a chaste life and be ready and willing for the sake of his cause to give up his life and his possessions.⁴

1. The article entitled *In the Frontier Province* in *Harijan* dated October 22 and 29 and Nov. 5, 12, and 19, 1938.

2. The ideal of non-violence includes man's relation to sub-human life also, but in the case of a political organisation like the Congress non-violence is limited to human beings. The extension of non-violence to sub-human species will exclude from the membership of the Congress millions of people and thus cramp its effort to substitute the law of love for that of brute force in society. *H.*, Sep. 15, 1940, p. 285.

3. *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.

4. As regards willingness to be deprived of one's possession, Gandhiji's attitude is determined by the ideal of non-possession. In 1920, it is said, he did not object to satyagrahis alienating their property to avoid its

4. He must be a habitual khadi-wearer and spinner.
5. He must be a teetotaler and be free from the use of other intoxicants.
6. He must carry out with a willing heart all the rules of discipline as may be laid down from time to time.
7. He should carry out the jail rules unless they are specially devised to hurt his self-respect.

The test of the effectiveness of discipline is that there should develop among the volunteers a spirit and an atmosphere of non-violence which should affect all those that come into contact with them. They should be able to exercise restraint in the face of the greatest provocation and to control the violent elements in the locality.¹ They should also be serious about the constructive programme. Gandhiji does not expect satyagrahi soldiers to assimilate the whole science of satyagraha and strictly to live up to all the implications of non-violence. According to him, "There never will be an army of perfectly non-violent people. It will be formed of those who will honestly endeavour to observe non-violence."² Nor does he expect them to have the resourcefulness of the general. It is enough if they faithfully carry out his orders.³ But they must develop the capacity to act even without the leaders, for the latter may be removed by the Government any moment. This is why, according to Gandhiji, in satyagraha "at a pinch every satyagrahi soldier has also to be his own general and leader."⁴

The volunteer need not be intellectually well-equipped. At any rate the Western type of literary education is not much

attachment or sale by the Government. Not that he encouraged the practice, but he left it to satyagrahis to fix the limit of their suffering. He also approved of the Congress ministries restoring the lands of satyagrahi sufferers which had been vindictively disposed of at absurdly cheap rates by the preceding Government in pursuance of their repressive policy. He is, however, against satyagrahis trying, in the event of their capturing the State machinery, to cash their past sacrifices by claiming preference in Government appointments, demanding reinstatement to dismissed posts, or seeking compensation for losses. *History of the Congress*, p. 274. H., Dec. 3, 1938, p. 364.

1. H., June 24, 1939, p. 175.

2. H., July 21, 1940, p. 214.

3. H., Aug. 25, 1940, p. 262.

4. H., July 28, 1940, p. 227.

of an advantage ; for its emphasis on material values makes it difficult for the individual to renounce attachment and make sacrifices.

The leader, his lieutenants and the non-violent organisation try to propagate the message of satyagraha among the masses.

To propagate means, to disseminate or diffuse some belief or practice. Propaganda is a systematic scheme or concerted movement for the promotion of a doctrine or practice.¹ In the modern State propaganda is the instrument which a group employs to control public opinion with a view to acquire, wield and preserve the power of government. Both in international warfare and political conflicts the object of propaganda is to increase the morale of the propagandist and disrupt that of the opponent. In the West the character and content of propaganda is determined by the prevailing attitude of moral cynicism and unscrupulous opportunism.

The modern propagandist is an expert psychologist, an adept in symbol-making and phrase-coining, and a demagogue who can, by subtle suggestion and mass hypnosis, evoke in the people desired emotional effect and behaviour. A very wide range of instruments has been pressed into the service of propaganda. Education and press, parades and processions, fraud and coercion, gold and patronage, the magic of slogans and oratory, colour and pageantry, painting and music, drama and sculpture—all these have their own place in the propagandist artistry. Indeed, propaganda is considered as different from accurate information and unbiased scientific exposition.

In his views on propaganda Gandhiji differs vitally from this Western attitude. He is against exploiting public opinion and acquiring over it an illegitimate power. But he

1. *The Oxford English Dictionary* ; and *A New English Dictionary* edited by Sir James Murray. E. H. Henderson defines propaganda as a process which deliberately attempts through persuasion-techniques to secure from the propagandee, before he can deliberate freely, the responses desired by the propagandist. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1943, 18, pp. 71-87.

does believe in propaganda in the sense of transmitting and disseminating truth and educating public opinion along non-violent lines. It is not enough for the satyagrahi to follow the ideals of truth and non-violence himself, he should also help others to comprehend them and live upto them.

Ideally speaking, satyagraha or soul-force transcends material media and is self-propagated. Truth and non-violence, the language of the soul, can be best represented by life itself and not by mere words spoken or written. As Gandhiji once remarked to some Christian missionaries, “. . . the moment there is a spiritual expression in life, the surroundings will readily respond. There is no desire to speak when one lives the truth. Truth is most economical of words. There is thus no truer or other evangelism than life.”¹

The real propaganda for satyagraha, therefore is the satyagrahi living up to non-violent values. “Those who believe in the simple truths I have laid down,” Gandhiji said in one of his speeches, “can propagate them only by living them.”² A life lived according to the principles of non-violence is a life of direct personal service of the people and service involves suffering, both service and suffering producing the greatest effect when silent and unadvertised. Says Gandhiji, “. . . the silent and undemonstrative action of truth and love produces far more permanent and abiding results than speeches or such other showy performances.”³

A life lived according to non-violent values implies control over thought, and fully controlled thought acquires the greatest potency and never goes in vain. “Thought control means maximum of work with minimum of energy. If we had that control, we should not have to put forth the tremendous effort we do. Non-violent action does mean much silent work and little speech or writing.”⁴

1. *H.*, Dec. 12, 1936, p. 353.

2. *H.*, March 28, 1936, p. 49.

3. *Y.I.*, Aug. 8, 1929.

4. *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 160.

No doubt suffering love expressing itself in service advances the cause of satyagraha as nothing else can, but the satyagrahi, not having complete thought control due to human imperfections, also taps all legitimate means, the press and platform, parades and processions, songs and other visual and verbal symbols which can help in the education of the masses. There is nothing intrinsically immoral or wrong in the use of these means.

Though innocent in themselves, the usual modes of propaganda must be treated as hand-maids of service and must not supplant it. In 1936 the members of the Gandhi Sewa Sangh stressed the need of some kind of organised propaganda in order to help the spread of Gandhiji's teachings. Gandhiji, while insisting that satyagraha can be demonstrated only by the life of a satyagrahi, conceded that other methods may also be utilized. He said, "You may say that books and newspapers are needed in order to help workers and answer critics. Well, I write as much as is needed in order to explain the things I stand for . . . Write, if you feel that you cannot do without it. But let not your work suffer or the people's enthusiasm be damped because you fail to publish books."¹

The press and similar means of propaganda must never offend against truth and non-violence, and the emphasis must be on quality rather than on speed and quantity. Thus it is Gandhiji's experience that touring on foot is beter propaganda than a whirlwind campaign by cars and aeroplanes. Gandhiji has undertaken many propaganda tours of the country, but easily the most impressive of these is the historic foot march to Dandi in the mass civil disobedience of 1930.

Gandhiji distrusts undue enthusiasm and discourages all demonstrations and slogans that smack of anger or intolerance.² In satyagrahi meetings he always insists on

1. *H.*, March 28, 1936, pp. 49-50.

2. For Gandhiji's detailed instructions as to how processions, demonstrations, etc. should be non-violently managed see *Y.I.*, I., pp. 314-29 and 442-44.

discipline, respect for opposite views, and speeches not being punctuated with either marks of approval or disapproval of the audience.¹

In his speeches the satyagrahi must avoid any trace of untruth and exaggeration and must not seek to arouse in the audience violent feelings of anger or hatred. This does not mean that satyagrahi addresses are unimpressive. Nothing is more impressive, nothing works as a more effective spell than truth. The language of Gandhiji's speeches is Biblical in its simplicity. He utterly lacks the dramatic pageantry, hypnotic mannerisms of delivery and semi-hysteric shouting and shrieking which characterized Hitler's demagogic performances. All the same Gandhiji's simple utterances make an irresistible appeal.²

Indeed Gandhiji has a flair for using various means of propaganda to the best advantage. His Dandi March, the manufacture of salt, the bonfire of certificates in South Africa³ and of foreign cloth in India, and *hartals*⁴ are some of the instances which bear testimony to his effectiveness in this respect. In his auto-biography he distinguishes between an argumentative speech and another that was intended to be a feeling appeal.⁵ Before the Congress accepted office in the provinces, Gandhiji once expressed the opinion that the Congress regime should be inaugurated with something that caught the imagination of the masses.⁶

1. *Speeches*, pp. 444-456 and 544-5.

2. Mr Krishnadas describing one of his speeches delivered in English says, "I knew not whether to call it a speech, or an inspired utterance pregnant with celestial force . . . every single word came from the innermost depth of his heart and acted like a charm. Hence the mere sounds of his words pierced and entered the hearts of its hearers. As he went on talking in solemn strain, it seemed as though he was casting a hypnotic spell over the audience, and irresistibly drawing all hearts to himself. I noticed that as he spoke there was no emotion in his eyes, nor was there the slightest movement of the limbs." *Seven Months with Mahatmaji*, Vol. I, p. 91.

3. *South Africa*, Ch. XXVII.

4. In his evidence before the Hunter Committee (1919) Gandhiji stated that "*Hartal* was designed to strike the imagination of the people and the Government". *Y.J.*, I, p. 23.

5. *Experiments*, II, p. 537.

6. *H.*, Jan. 8, 1938, p. 412.

The tremendous hold that Gandhiji has acquired over the masses in India is ample evidence of his being a great propagandist in the pure and not the shady, disreputable sense of the term. For twenty-five years he has dominated Indian politics and represents the Indian masses as no other Indian leader does. He has revolutionized the outlook of the people, disintegrating conventions, upsetting old standards, creating new symbols and setting up new values.

His effectiveness as a propagandist is due to the fact that he has been closely following what he has been preaching. His devotion to truth and non-violence irrespective of where they might lead, a devotion ringing so clear in his writings and utterances, his all-sided self-control, his meekness combined with the unbending and unbendable strength of a true satyagrahi, the bare body and the loin-cloth symbolizing his identification with the poor and indicating the extent to which he has divested himself of all possession in order to serve them—all these are indications of an unusually close approximation of personal life to principles propagated. Thus the strength of his appeal is primarily due to the force of his personality, his soul-force.

Gandhiji is against the newspaper or the popular press which is a commercial concern and is controlled by financiers and advertisers. He had such newspapers in mind when, addressing some college students in 1925, he characterized the craze for newspapers as "pitiable and terrible", for "newspapers afford nothing of human interest. They offer nothing to help the character."¹

But a properly conducted journal can act as a powerful weapon in satyagraha. Writing about *Indian Opinion*, which he published in South Africa, he observes, "satyagraha would probably have been impossible without *Indian Opinion*."² Perhaps *Young India* and *Navajivan* and later

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 1208.

For similar criticism of English newspapers see *Hind Swaraj*, p. 17.

2. *Experiments*, II, p. 76.

Harijan weeklies played no less illustrious a part in the non-violent movements in India. These journals were a mirror of Gandhiji's non-violent life and a medium of educating the reading public in the inner meaning of satyagraha.¹

In order that journalism may play its legitimate part its sole aim should be service, i.e., it should express and educate public opinion and expose popular defects. But no journal can realize the ideal of service so long as it depends on the support of the advertiser and permits its pages to be soiled by indecent advertisements. So a newspaper should be self-supporting, for this is the clearest proof that the service that the paper renders is actually desired and appreciated by the community and is not imposed upon it by force.² The profits, if any, should be utilised for some constructive public activity.³ Newspapers, moreover, must weigh every word they write and must not indulge in untruth or exaggeration or bitterness.⁴

In the course of a satyagraha campaign the Government places serious restrictions on the freedom of the press. In such a case Gandhiji advises the newspapers either to cease publication or to challenge the Government and brave all consequences. In the past campaigns when the Government suppressed the entire English and Vernacular Press openly advocating the cause of satyagraha, under Gandhiji's advice satyagrahis depended for carrying their message to the masses on small handwritten unregistered newspapers. Those who receive the first copy of these recopy and thus the process of multiplication is made to cover a large part of the country. Besides, one copy passes from hand to hand and serves a surprisingly large number. These handwritten sheets make a deep impression of sincerity, eagerness to suffer and defy consequences, and exert far greater influence upon public opinion than regular newspapers.

1. *Experiments*, II, chapters 13 and 34. *South Africa*, Ch. III.

2. *Experiments*, II, p. 77 ; *South Africa*, p. 222 ; *Y I*, I, p. 3 ; *Y.I.*, II, p. 5.

3. *Y.I.*, I, p. 1034 ; *Y.I.*, II, p. 6.

4. *Experiments*, II, pp. 77-8.

When the anti-war satyagraha of 1940-41 started there was a fear that the Government might suppress the entire Congress press. Gandhiji advised the extensive use of oral news-carrying as a substitute for the printed word. He wrote, "Let every one become his own walking newspaper and carry the good news from mouth to mouth . . . The idea here is of my telling my neighbour what I have authentically heard. This no government can overtake, or suppress. It is the cheapest newspaper yet devised, and it defies the wit of the Government, however clever it may be. Let these walking newspapers be sure of the news they give."¹

On the whole, the strength of the satyagrahi propaganda lies in the universal appeal of its high moral objective and its downright adherence to truth. This propaganda is primarily conducted through service and suffering, and its efficiency is also due to the fact that the usual means of propaganda, i.e., speeches, writings, etc., cannot move us as the sight of persons living up to an ideal and suffering for it does. The suffering satyagrahi moves our entire being, makes the ideal vivid, concrete and living and induces in us an enduring heart-felt belief which affects our conduct much more than a mere intellectual conviction. Apart from the question of efficiency, the usual means of propaganda are in the hands of the capitalist and the exploiter and cannot be fully utilized by those seeking to revolutionize the existing social, political and economic system. On the other hand service and sacrifice are open to all.

By far the best propaganda for satyagraha is the constructive programme. Truth and love are life-giving and constructive, and even the apparently destructive, but really cleansing, form of satyagraha, i.e., non-violent direct action, is undertaken with a view to remove obstruction in the pathway of reconstruction. Cleansing is the means, construction the end. Constructive satyagraha is nothing but "internal growth." It is the concrete expression of truth and non-violence.

To facilitate non-violent reconstruction in India Gandhiji aims at destroying the present political system by means of non-violent direct action. But the work of construction is not to wait till the State machinery is captured by non-violence. Gandhiji is a philosophical anarchist. He aims at reducing State action to the minimum and believes in reform from within through private, i.e., non-governmental activities. That is why constructive work precedes direct action, accompanies it and follows it. The satyagrahi builds anew even as he struggles against an outmoded, unjust social order.

But for this emphasis on the constructive programme, Gandhiji believes, non-violent direct action is impossible for several reasons. To fight with the opponent satyagrahis must generate internal strength through self-purification by conscious co-operative effort. Fighting against evils in others and harbouring them in oneself is neither truth nor non-violence. This purification does not mean agitation and demonstration nor even the excitement of jail-going. It is quiet, solid, substantial work—direct personal service of the masses, suffering for them, organising them, educating them in the ways of non-violence and thus bringing about a peaceful atmosphere of solemn determination. Constructive work is thus collective purificatory effort through service.

If the difficult, slow and exacting work of reconstruction is too humble, dull and unattractive to satyagrahis, if they hunger and thirst merely for joining battle with the adversary, direct action will be destructive and violent. For it is a clear indication that satyagrahis lack the spirit of service and non-violence and still harbour violence. As Gandhiji once remarked, "Unaccompanied by the spirit of service, court-ing imprisonment and inviting beating and lathi charges, becomes a species of violence."¹ In a recent statement he wrote, "Civil Disobedience, without the backing of the constructive programme, is criminal and a waste of effort."²

Describing the efficiency of the constructive programme Gandhiji wrote in 1922, "It will steady and calm us. It will wake our organising spirit, it will make us industrious, it

1. *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 67.

2. Gandhiji's statement, dated Oct. 30, 1941.

will make us fit for *Swaraj*, it will cool our blood.”¹ Constructive programme thus turns a raw satyagrahi recruit into a disciplined soldier. Being a sure test of the earnestness of satyagrahis, it weeds out moral weaklings, and opportunists.

Success in a satyagraha campaign is impossible unless satyagrahis have the sincere backing of and firm control over the masses so that the latter would eschew all violence. The only way to acquire this control is to win the heart of the masses and to establish a living contact with them. This is impossible unless satyagrahis “work for them, through them and in their midst, not as their patrons but as their servants.”² Constructive work, as Gandhiji wrote in 1930, “must throw together the people and their leaders whom they would trust implicitly. Trust begotten in the pursuit of continuous constructive work becomes a tremendous asset at the critical moment.”³ Constructive activities are not only an evidence of the sincerity of satyagrahis but also show to the masses, as no mere words can, the potentiality of satyagraha for ending all exploitation and elevating their status. Constructive work also goes a long way to convince the opponent of the non-violent intentions of the satyagrahis. To Gandhiji, “Constructive work, therefore, is for a non-violent army what drilling etc., is for an army designed for bloody warfare.”³ “Just as military training is necessary for armed revolt, training in constructive effort is equally necessary for civil resistance.”⁴

Even the earliest satyagraha campaign in South Africa had its positive constructive side, activities concerning “internal improvement.”⁵ In 1920 Gandhiji presented the constructive programme, through the Congress, to India. Since then his faith in the efficacy of the programme has grown and he has laid increasing stress on satyagrahis working the constructive programme before non-violent direct action as the means of generating moral strength and building up the morale and after direct action as a means of consolidation and as an antidote to any possible intoxication of a victory or depression of a setback.

1. *Y.I.*, I, p. 404.

2. *Y.I.*, III, p. 69.

3. *Y.I.*, Jan. 9, 1930.

4. Gandhiji's statement, dated Oct. 27, 1944.

5. *South Africa*, pp. 76-7.

“Constructive Programme”, Gandhiji wrote in 1930, “is not essential for local civil disobedience for specific relief, as in the case of Bardoli. Tangible common grievance restricted to a particular locality is enough. But for such an undefinable thing as *Swaraj* people must have previous training in doing things of All-India interest.”¹ But even in the case of Bardoli, as R. B. Gregg points out, Gandhiji ascribed much of the success to the fact that a constructive economic and social programme of reform had been going on there for six or seven years previous.²

The cleansing and constructive activities are the positive and negative aspects of satyagraha, each being indispensable to the other. Direct action to be non-violent should be rooted in and lead to reconstruction, while in this imperfect world the latter is bound occasionally to meet with obstructions which have to be removed by direct action. Constructive activities, however, are more important than direct action. Unlike direct action, the constructive programme leaves no room for hypocrisy, compulsion and violence.³ It does not provoke in the opponent violent feelings which may be aroused by direct action. Besides, in the case of a subject country like India the greater the cultivation of constructive non-violence, the less the need to offer civil disobedience to win independence.⁴ Gandhiji considers the definite, intelligent and free adoption of this programme as the attainment of the substance of independence and believes that this would surely be followed by the transfer of power to the people, the symbol of independence.⁵ This is why he calls the constructive programme “the permanent part of non-

1. *Y.I.*, Jan. 9, 1930.

2. *The Power of Non-violence*, p. 306.

3. *H.*, June 1, 1935, p. 123.

4. *Y.I.*, II, p. 447. *H.*, Jan. 2, 1937, p. 376.

5. *Speeches*, p. 843.

In a recent statement (Oct. 27, 1944) Gandhiji observed, “. . . the constructive programme is the non-violent and truthful way of winning *Poorna-Swaraj*. Its wholesale fulfilment is complete independence. Imagine 40 crores of people engaged in the whole of the constructive programme which is designed to build up the nation from the very bottom upward. Can anybody dispute the proposition that it must mean complete independence in every sense of the expression, including the ousting of foreign domination?”

violent effort", "the embodiment of the active principle of *ahimsa*" and "construction of *Poorna Swaraj*."¹

In an earlier chapter we have pointed out how according to Gandhiji non-violence of the brave is vital to true democracy which he defines as "the art and science of mobilising the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all."² The constructive programme is the *modus operandi* of the ideal democracy.

As for its content, the constructive programme of Gandhiji is the scaffolding on which will grow the structure of the non-violent State. It is an effort to recast the present social order so as to eliminate all exploitation and injustice and to revive and refine the nation's creative genius and culture by a voluntary regress to simplicity and naturalness. Non-violent life necessarily implies decentralized cottage industries and self-sufficient and self-sustaining satyagrahi rural communities.

In its methods the programme is individualistic. Gandhiji believes that to revolutionize the entire country the satyagrahi should concentrate his efforts on a particular area, a village or town and there too on individuals. The particular and the individual is a definite, living, tangible entity, while the general and the universal is an invisible, indefinite, vague abstraction. The reform of the former will lead to that of the latter. If a few individuals in a village are affected by the example of the satyagrahi and are converted to the new way of life the regeneration of the locality will be facilitated. Similarly once the problems of a few villages are solved and a spirit of co-operation developed, it will not be difficult to solve the problems of the entire district and so on. It is some such reasoning which is responsible for Gandhiji's stay at Sevagram. He also holds that "in order to do full justice to constructive work it must be treated on its own merits and not made an appendage to political work."³

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1. H., May 18, 1940, p. 129 and June 3, 1939, p. 147. *Constructive Programme*, p. 1.
 2. H., May 27, 1939, p. 143.
 3. *New Horizons in Khadi Work*, Pyarelal's statement, March 28, 1945.

The constructive programme in India is essentially village work. The fifteen items which Gandhiji now includes in the programme are those which are indispensable for the emancipation of the nation through non-violence. These items are :—

1. Communal unity ;
2. Removal of untouchability ;
3. Prohibition ;
4. *Khadi* ;
5. Other village industries ;
6. New or basic education ;
7. Adult education ;
8. Village sanitation ;
9. Service of backward tribes ;
10. Uplift of women ;
11. Education in hygiene and health ;
12. Propagation of *Rastrabhasa* ;
13. Love of one's language ;
14. Working for economic equality ; and
15. Organisation of *kisans*, labour and students.

Of these Gandhiji attaches the greatest importance to the economic items and particularly to *khadi*. Gandhiji considers economic problems in terms of the moral well-being of man. His economic outlook is determined by the ideals of non-possession, non-stealing, bread-labour and *swadeshi*. The ideal of economic equality is dear to him, as the co-existence of superfluities and starvation means exploitation and frustration, want and squalor and makes the realization of spiritual unity so difficult to the rich and the poor. To Gandhiji working for economic equality is the master key to non-violent independence ; for a non-violent State is an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the poor persists and the conflict between them is not abolished.¹ By economic equality Gandhiji means approximate, and not absolute, equality. "Economic equality must never be supposed to mean possession of an equal amount of worldly goods by every one. It does mean,

1. *Constructive Programme*, p. 18.

however, that every one will have a proper house to live in, sufficient and balanced food to eat, and sufficient *khadi* with which to cover himself. It also means that the cruel inequality that obtains today will be removed by purely non-violent means.”¹ To achieve this equality Gandhiji advocates both levelling down and levelling up. For levelling down, he would so far as possible avoid legislative expropriation and confiscation as these involve violence. To induce the rich to accept the ideal of economic equality and hold their wealth in trust for the poor, he would depend upon persuasion, education, non-violent non-co-operation and other non-violent means.

For removing the abject, grinding poverty and unemployment of the masses, his remedy is *khadi*, and the revival of other village industries, the revival being “an extension of the *khadi* effort.” Gandhiji considers *khadi* as one of the two most important of his activities, the other being untouchability.² *Khadi* to him the most effective substitute for violent dispossession.³ His attachment to *khadi* is due primarily to moral considerations.

Non-violence and centralized industry, he thinks, are incompatible. Mass production is exploitation of nature as well as man and this is the very negation of non-violence. Conscious adoption of handicrafts is an important step towards world peace in so far as mass production, which can only subsist on the control of large markets, is the mainspring of modern international rivalries, imperialistic exploitation and wars.

In national affairs large scale industry vitiates democracy. For it leads to concentration of economic power and this implies corresponding concentration of political power and the ever-present possibility of the abuse of such power.

Mass production degrades workers depriving them of their dignity and worth, uprooting them from the purity and naturalness of domestic atmosphere in rural areas, baulking their creative urge and turning them into mere machine tools.

1. *H.*, Aug. 18, 1940, p. 253.

2. G. D. Birla, *Bapu* (Hindi), p. 19.

3. *H.*, Jan. 2, 1937, p. 375.

Large scale production offends against nature too. Increasing cost of coal and oil, the accumulated energy reserves of the earth, and their gradually diminishing supplies have led some thinkers to the conclusion that in order to balance the energy budget of the world production should be carried on through handicrafts. Handicrafts, unlike big machinery, depend on human labour, i.e., energy obtained from vegetation, the current source of energy supply on the earth's surface.¹

Decentralised, small scale economic organisation is superior to large scale production in all these respects. Further, mass production requires much larger capital than handicrafts and, instead of reducing unemployment, multiplies it due to continuous rationalisation and labour-saving and on account of markets being limited. Small scale industry ensures equitable distribution of wealth and spreading over of purchasing power and prevents unemployment, urbanization, moral deterioration, exploitation by capitalists or professional experts and other concomitants of the centralized production.² Decentralisation of production and distribution means automatic regulation of economic life, very little chance of fraud and none for speculation.³ Small scale industry also means employment in congenial occupations in the natural setting of the worker's own place of habitation, combined with numerous physical, moral, material and other benefits that go with such employment. It preserves the purity and compactness of domestic life, the artistry, skill and creative talent of the people and their sense of freedom, ownership and dignity. It is a move towards simplification of life and ruralization of society. The conscious adoption of small scale industries will lead to the economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency of the villages and develop in the people the moral stamina to stand square against all oppression and injustice.

1. R. B. Gregg, *The Economics of Khaddar*, Chs. I and II ; Lewis Mumford, *Techniques and Civilization*, pp. 156-58.
2. It has been calculated that in the textile industry (mills) in India the wage bill comes to only 22% of the proceeds of products. In the case of *Khadi* the wages form about 60% of the price. *Gandhiji, His Life and Work*, cited above, p. 214.
3. *H.*, Nov. 2, 1934, p. 302.

Even in the absence of any considerable State aid *khadi* already occupies a prominent place in the economy of the country and can claim to be a sound economic proposition.¹ No doubt before the present war *khadi* cost more than the mill-cloth to the consumer, but to the farmer the price is immaterial, for he gets his *khadi* from his own yarn. By patient experimentation, improvement of tools and application of scientific knowledge *khadi* production can be made much more efficient.

After food cloth is the article most in universal demand. So to Gandhiji *khadi* is one of the lungs of the nation, the other being agriculture.² He also calls *khadi* the sun of the solar system of the village economy and likens other handicrafts to planets.³ Agriculture is not the sun but one of the planets because today it is being controlled by the Government and not the people. Agriculture as it is could not alone develop the faculties of mind as *khadi* or other handicrafts requiring

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1. A large part of *khadi* production is of the "self-sufficiency" nature of which no statistics are available. As for the "market *khadi*" for the period of 18 months ending in June 1942 the value of *khadi* produced under the auspices of A.I.S.A. was Rs. 1,20,02,430, of *khadi* sold Rs. 1,49,84,513 and of the wages disbursed about Rs. 80 lacs. *Khadi* activities covered 15,110 villages. There were 860 production centres and 343 sale depots. The figures of spinners were 3,24,391 and of weavers 25,024, the total number of artisans engaged in *Khadi* activities being 3,54,257. The minimum wage is six annas for eight hours of work. The aggregate funds employed in the activities of the Association are about 50 lacs of rupees. The entire textile industry of India with a capital one hundred times as large as that of the A.I.S.A. provides work for only twice as many men.
 1. According to the latest report of the A.I.S.A. (July 1942 to June 1944) 1,00,45,214 sq. yards of *khadi* worth Rs. 76,62,368 was produced in 1942-43 and 1,11,53,755 sq. yards worth Rs. 1,30,13,853 in 1943-44; sales of *khadi* amounted to Rs. 1,07,90,410 in 1942-43 and Rs. 1,30,06,988 in 1943-44. *Khadi* activities were carried on in 9444 villages in 1942-43 and 9503 villages in 1943-44. The figures of spinners, weavers and other artisans were 2,21,981; 19,044; and 2799 respectively in 1942-43 and 2,39,332; 21,041 and 3508 in 1943-44. The wages paid to artisans amounted to Rs. 42,19,636 in 1942-43, and Rs. 77,84,276 in 1943-44. The number of production centres and sale depots was 520 and 251 in 1942-43 and 494 and 326 in 1943-44. 18,73,54,661 sq. yards of *khadi* worth Rs. 9,34,94,201 was produced from 1924 to 1943-44 and Rs. 11,96,13,515 worth of it was sold in that period. Rs. 5,60,90,368 was paid as wages from 1925 to 1943-44. See the annual reports of A.I.S.A. and Gandhiji, *His Life and Work*, p. 200.
 2. His statement, Sept. 17, 1934.
 3. Y. I., III, p. 84.

skill and intelligence could.¹

With Gandhiji the spinning wheel is also a complete philosophy of life and is the living symbol of non-violence.² He says, "*Ahimsa* must express itself through acts of selfless service of the masses. I cannot think of a better symbol or medium for its expression than the spinning wheel."³ There is another logic, besides its value as the service of the poor, which connects the wheel and *ahimsa*. Since 1920 the wheel has been connected with India's non-violent fight for freedom and has been given the pride of place in the constructive programme. *Khadi*, moreover, signifies simplicity and, therefore, purity of life.⁴ It is a symbol of the eagerness of the rich for the uplift of the poor. The wheel has thus come to represent a new type of satyagrahi civilization.

The reason why in satyagrahi discipline Gandhiji lays greater stress on *khadi* than on any other item in the constructive programme is that "millions of people can take their share in this work and progress can be arithmetically measured. Communal unity and the removal of untouchability cannot be thus assessed. Once they become part of our daily life, nothing need be done by us as individuals."⁵

Recently Gandhiji has effected a reorientation of the policy of the A.I.S.A. after the August disturbances of 1942 the Government pursued a policy of severe repression towards the Congress and its ancillary organisations. Consequently the activities of the A.I.S.A. suffered a severe set-back. The new policy adopted by the trustees of the A.I.S.A. on the recommendation of Gandhiji seeks to widen and deepen *khadi* work with a view to demonstrate how the spinning wheel can be made the foundation of the non-violent social order. According to the new policy the object of *khadi* workers should be not merely to provide economic relief to the poor but also to help them to win *swaraj* non-violently by resuscitation of

1. *New Horizons in Khadi Work*.

2. *Charkha Sangha Paripatra* (Hindi), I (Dec. 5, 1944), p. 2.

3. *H.*, May 6, 1939, p. 113.

4. *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 137 and Jan. 28, 1939, p. 449.

5. *H.*, Aug. 18, 1940, p. 252.

self-reliance, initiative and non-violent virtues in the people.¹

To influence people so as to lay the foundations of the new social order *khadi* workers must win the confidence of the people and enter every aspect of their life. So *khadi* work is no longer to be pursued as an isolated activity but as an integral part of the programme for the regeneration and uplift of villages. "It has thus become closely interwoven with such items as agriculture (including cattle improvement), removal of untouchability, realization of economic equality and above all education both in moral and material values for which *khadi* stands."¹ Thus the A.I.S.A. now stands for all round village service (*samagra gramseva*) through the *charkha*.

Another important feature of the new policy is decentralization. The experience of non-violent movements in India amply bears out that the less decentralized a resisting or constructive non-violent organisation the easier it is for the Government to paralyse it. Gandhiji is anxious that non-violent organisations should not be at the mercy of the Government. He wants, therefore, completely to decentralize the production and sale of *khadi* so that every consumer of *khadi* will be a spinner and every one engaged in *khadi* production will be a *khadi* wearer. Ultimately *khadi* work now carried on through the various branches of the A.I.S.A., will be left entirely to all-round village workers.² But for this a large number of workers will have to be trained. To start with the number of sale depots and production centres will be reduced. In towns part of the price of *khadi* sold in sale depots will be paid in yarn. From July 1, 1945 two pice worth of yarn is being realized for every rupee worth of *khadi* sold. The proportion of yarn, it is expected, will be gradually increased. In villages *khadi* should be exchanged for yarn alone, Gandhiji's ideal being every village producing just enough *khadi* for its own use.² So long as this ideal is not realized *khadi* produced in a particular place should be consumed there in the first instance. If people in any place produced without any difficulty more *khadi* than

1. *Charkha Sangh Pariṣat* (Hindi), I, Dec. 12, 1944, p. 2.

2. *New Horizons in Khadi Work*, cited above.

their requirement it could be supplied to the nearest place in need. But even for this Gandhiji feels that a district, at the utmost a province, should be the limit.¹ Those who do not spin for themselves can use the yarn spun by their relations or neighbours.

On the basis of yarn produced during the first five years at the basic school at Sewagram Gandhiji is convinced that *khadi* can be introduced in the villages through *Nayee Talim* very quickly ; for “*khadi* produced by the children during the period of their training would be sufficient to clothe the entire village and it would be the cheapest cloth possible.”¹

Reconstruction of villages so as to make them self-reliant and self-sufficient requires the development not only of *khadi* but also of other existing, dying or dead cottage industries which are remunerative. *Khadi* and other cottage industries are interdependent. Without *khadi*, the other industries cannot grow, while without the revival of other essential industries, *khadi* cannot make satisfactory progress.² The development of village industries will turn the villages from mere creators of raw produce into self-sustained units and caterers for most of the requirements of the cities and will end the exploitation of the villages by cities.³ Gandhiji wants such simple machines and tools to be used in village industries as the villagers can make and afford to use ?⁴ In very rare cases he would not object to even modern machine power being used when the work involved is so heavy that it would be cruel to use man-power and when machinery is used under proper safeguards to make exploitation impossible.⁵

Recently the All India Village Industries Association decided to appoint *sanchalaks* (directors or guides) who will, in the areas committed to their charge, interpret the policy

1. *New Horizons in Khadi Work.*

2. *H.*, Nov. 16, 1934, p. 317 ; *Constructive Programme*, cited above, p. 11.

3. *H.*, Dec. 21, 1934, p. 356.

4. *H.*, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 226.

5. *When Machine Power*, by J. C. Kumarappa, *H.*, March 15, 1942, p. 76. In 1942 with Gandhiji's approval the A.I.V.I.A. permitted certified shops to sell hand-lifted paper from pulp produced by power. For the place of machinery in the non-violent economic organisation, see also Ch. XI *infra*.

of the association, survey the conditions of rural life and recommend schemes for constructive work. They will supervise the work of village industries and educate the public about the various processes of these industries. They will also guide and direct those carrying on the actual field work, i.e., agents, affiliated institutions, recognised producing centres and certified shops. All of these will be independent of the central organisation except for the supervision by *sanchalaks*.

Rural reconstruction would be incomplete without adequate attention to education in health and hygiene and to village sanitation. Gandhiji seeks to develop in the country "a sense of national or social sanitation" and to turn Indian villages which are no better than dung-heaps into models of cleanliness.

The importance that Gandhiji attaches to prohibition is due to the fact that people in villages and cities will be incapable of moral effort necessary for satyagraha so long as they are in the grip of intoxicants. He would not therefore leave the work of prohibition to the future free government of the country. He feels that women and students have a special opportunity to advance this reform. By opening recreation booths and by acts of loving service they can acquire on addicts a hold which will compel them to listen to the appeal to give up the evil habit.¹

Communal unity implies "an unbreakable heart-unity" and not mere political unity which may be imposed. Religious bitterness is a sign of lack of non-violent atmosphere. Gandhiji expects every Congressman to have the same regard for other faiths as he has for his own and to cultivate friendship with persons representing faiths other than his own.²

Similarly social equality demands removal of untouchability which is a denial of the spiritual unity of all men and of the law *Varna*.³

1. *Constructive Programme*, cited above, p. 7. See also Ch. XI *infra*.

2. *Constructive Programme*, cited above, p. 4.

3. See Chapter IV, pp. 92-3.

Non-violence rules out suppression of women also. "In a plan of life based on non-violence, woman has as much right to shape her own destiny as man has to shape his."¹ He wants the customary and legal status of women to be changed so that they become true helpmates of men in the mission of service and equal partners in the fight for *swaraj*.

If the constructive programme is to convert people to the new way of life and to lay the foundations of the future non-violent State, the education of children and adults must be conducted along non-violent lines. Basic education aims at transforming children into model villagers. "It develops both the body and the mind, and keeps the child rooted to the soil with a glorious vision of the future in the realization of which he or she begins to take his or her share from the very commencement of his or her career in school."²

By adult education Gandhiji means true political education of the village adult by word of mouth which will open his mind to the greatness and vastness of his country and make him conscious of the power he possesses to remove foreign rule. Side by side with this education the adult should also be given literary education.³

According to Gandhiji our love of the English language in preference to the great languages of our country has caused a deep chasm between the educated classes and the masses, has cut off the latter from the modern developments and stood in the way of India's non-violent *swaraj*. Non-violent *swaraj* implies that "every individual makes his own direct contribution to the Independence movement. The masses cannot do this fully unless they understand every step with all its implications. This is impossible unless every step is explained in their own language."⁴ In addition to the cultivation of Indian languages for the political education of the masses Gandhiji also advocates the propagation of Hindustani as the *Rastra Bhasha*.

1. *Constructive Programme*, cited above, p. 14.
2. *Ibid.* pp. 13.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

The constructive programme also includes work among labour, *kisans* and students. As for labour Gandhiji considers the non-violent organization of Ahmedabad to be a model for all India to copy.¹

In a predominantly agricultural country like India the masses mean the *Kisans*. The proper method of organising *Kisans* is indicated by Gandhiji's *Kisan* movements in Champaran, Kheda, Bardoli and Borsad. He insists that *Kisans* should not be exploited for political purposes outside their own personal and felt grievances.²

Students, Gandhiji advocates, should avoid party politics, political strikes, coercive, and secret ways, and communalism. They should take to spinning, use *khadi* and village products, learn the national language and enrich their mother tongue. They should be ready to quell riots by non-violent conduct at the risk of their lives. "And when the final heat of the struggle comes they will leave their institutions and, if need be, sacrifice themselves for the freedom of their country."³

The details of the constructive programme may differ from country to country, but the main principles are not local or temporary in character. The aim is the regeneration of society by ridding it of violence, and this requires decentralized economic structure, social equality and the right kind of education.

The constructive programme of Gandhiji has often been criticised by Indian socialists and communists as reformist and reactionary. The programme, they point out, is ameliorative and as such blunts the edge of popular discontent and reconciles people to their lot. It thus side-tracks the main issue and postpones the day of revolution. Revolution, it should be remembered, is often taken to mean violent change of political power from one group to another. Gandhiji, however, aims at a deeper revolution, a comprehensive change in values and symbols

1. For Gandhiji's views on labour organization see Ch. X *infra*.

2. *Constructive Programme*, p. 22. See also Ch. X *infra*.

3. *Constructive Programme*, p. 25.

that control human activities and institutions. The constructive programme is a vital element in this non-violent revolution. The programme is not merely conceived in the terms of the immediate but also lays the foundation of the future non-violent State.

To neglect the suffering of the masses for the purpose of deepening the discontent and thus hastening the revolution is treating men and women as mere means. Besides, extreme poverty, which reduces human life to mere physical existence and deadens all initiative and resourcefulness, instead of hastening revolutions, stands in the way of widespread awareness of social discontent.

The constructive programme carries the heartening message of satyagraha to the Indian peasant and makes him self-reliant and conscious of his rights and of how to achieve them as no mere speech-making and demonstrations can. It provides an opportunity to the rank and file of the satyagrahi army, in fact, to every individual to take some part in the work of social reconstruction. It is a common bond between satyagrahis and those that do not believe in non-violent direct action. This universality of its appeal is due to its comprehensive content. It touches every important sphere of life, moral and religious, economic and social. It is significant that in spite of much severe criticism no practicable alternative to the constructive programme has yet been suggested.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VIII

The pledge that Gandhiji drew up in 1921 is as under :—

With God as witness I solemnly declare that,

1. I wish to be a member of the National Volunteer Corps.
2. So long as I remain a member of the Corps, I shall remain non-violent in word and deed and shall earnestly endeavour to be non-violent in intent since I believe that, as

India is circumstanced, non-violence alone can help the *Khilaphat* and the Punjab and result in the attainment of *Swaraj* and consolidation of unity among all races and communities of India whether Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Parsee, Christian or Jew.

3. I believe in, and shall endeavour always to promote, such unity.

4. I believe in *Swadeshi* as essential for India's economic, political and moral salvation, and shall use hand-woven *khaddar* to the exclusion of every other cloth.

5. As a Hindu I believe in the justice and necessity of removing the evil of untouchability and shall on all possible occasions seek personal contact with, and endeavour to render service to, the submerged classes.

6. I shall carry out the instructions of my superior officers and all the regulations not inconsistent with the spirit of this pledge prescribed by the Volunteer Board or the Working Committee or any other agency established by the Congress.

7. I am prepared to suffer imprisonment, assault, or even death for the sake of my religion and my country without resentment.

8. In the event of my imprisonment, I shall not claim from the Congress any support for my family or dependents.

In 1930 he elaborated the discipline embodied in the pledge into the following 19 rules :

AS AN INDIVIDUAL

1. A Satyagrahi, i.e., a civil resister will harbour no anger.

2. He will suffer the anger of the opponent.

3. In so doing he will put up with assaults from the opponent, never retaliate ; but he will not submit, out of fear of punishment or the like, to any order given in anger.

4. When any person in authority seeks to arrest a civil resister, he will voluntarily submit to the arrest and he will

not resist the attachment or removal of his own property, if any, when it is sought to be confiscated.

5. If a civil resister has any property in his possession as a trustee, he will refuse to surrender it, even though in defending it he might lose his life. He will, however, never retaliate.

6. Non-retaliation excludes swearing and cursing.

7. Therefore a civil resister will never insult his opponent, and therefore, also, he may not take part in many of the newly coined cries which are contrary to the spirit of *ahimsa*.

8. A civil resister will not salute the Union Jack, nor will he insult it or officials, English or Indian.

9. In the course of the struggle if any one insults an official or commits an assault upon him, a civil resister will protect such official or officials from the insult or assault at the risk of his own life.

AS A PRISONER

10. A civil resister will behave with due decorum towards prison officials and will observe all such discipline of the prison as is not contrary to self-respect. Whilst he will salute officials in due prison discipline, he will not perform any humiliating task and refuse to cry victory to *sarkar*. He will take cleanly cooked and cleanly served food, which is not contrary to his religion, and will refuse to take food insultingly served or served in unclean vessels.

11. A civil resister will make no distinction between an ordinary prisoner and himself and will in no way regard himself as superior to the rest ; nor will he ask for any conveniences that may not be necessary for keeping his body in good health and condition. He is entitled to ask for such conveniences as may be required for his physical and spiritual well-being.

12. A civil resister will not fast for want of conveniences whose deprivation does not involve any injury to one's self-respect.

AS A UNIT

13. A civil resister will joyfully obey all orders issued by the leader of the corps, whether they please him or no.

14. He will carry out orders in the first instance, even though they appear to him to be insulting, inimical or foolish, and then appeal to higher authority. He is free to determine the fitness of the corps to satisfy him before joining it ; but after he has joined it, it becomes his duty to submit to its discipline, irksome or otherwise. If the sum total of the energy of the corps appears to a member to be improper or immoral, he has a right to sever his connection, but being within it, he has no right to commit a breach of its discipline.

15. No civil resister is to expect maintenance for his dependents. It would be an accident if any such provision is made. A civil resister entrusts his dependents to the care of God. Even in ordinary warfare wherein hundreds of thousands give themselves up to it, they are able to make no previous provision. How much more, then, should such be the case in satyagraha? It is the universal experience that in such times hardly anybody is left to starve.

IN COMMUNAL FIGHTS

16. No civil resister will intentionally become cause of communal quarrels.

17. In the event of any such outbreak, he will not take sides, but he will assist only that party which is demonstrably in the right. Being a Hindu he will be generous towards Mussalmans and others, and will sacrifice himself in the attempt to save non-Hindus from a Hindu attack. And if an attack is from the other side, he will not participate in any retaliation but will give his life in protecting Hindus.

18. He will, to the best of his ability, avoid every occasion that may give rise to communal quarrels.

19. If there is a procession of Satyagrahis they will do nothing that would wound the religious susceptibilities of any community, and they will not take part in any other processions that are likely to wound such susceptibilities.

CHAPTER IX

SATYAGRAHA AS CORPORATE ACTION

THE TECHNIQUE

Occasional group conflicts are inevitable. These should be settled by collective non-violent resistance. But though satyagraha can flourish in all places and at all times, even in violent atmosphere, non-violent direct action cannot. To quote Gandhiji, "civil disobedience is not the law of life ; satyagraha is. Satyagraha therefore never ceases ; civil disobedience can cease and ought to when there is no occasion for it."¹ For the launching and continuance of non-violent direct action external and internal conditions, i.e., the condition of the enemy and the satyagrahi must be favourable.

The non-violent direct action is no ordinary war of blood and fire, thunder and devastation. It is a moral war in which the usual process of fighting is reversed and the whole conflict elevated to a higher plane. Its object being conversion and not coercion, service and reformation and not defeat and destruction of the enemy, it should not be applied against an enemy in difficulty, specially when that difficulty is a matter of life and death with him. In the words of Gandhiji "... we should not embarrass an opponent who is in difficulty and make his difficulty our opportunity."¹

The reason for this emphasis on non-embarrassment is that taking advantage of the adversary's difficulty irritates him and makes him unsympathetic and revengeful. He feels that non-violence is merely a cloak and dissembling intended to harm him and his conversion becomes difficult.

Gandhiji also believes that the satyagrahi should do nothing that may brutalise the enemy and harden his moral sense. This does not mean that civil disobedience should be suspended merely because the opponent's repression is intensifying and becoming brutal.² In fact, if such suspension were in-

1. *H.*, Jan. 6, 1940, p. 404.

2. *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 159.

herent in satyagraha it would be a very serious limitation and the opponent would have a powerful motive to be brutal in order to bring about suspension.

Thus in 1930 when the Government started a regular reign of terror to suppress the satyagraha movement Gandhiji felt that the correct way to fight the brutal repression of the Government was to intensify civil disobedience and to widen its scope and thus to invite the Government "to disclose to the full the leonine paws of authority." "For according to the science of satyagraha, the greater the repression and lawlessness on the part of authority, the greater should be the suffering courted by the victims. Success is the certain result of suffering of the extremest character, voluntarily undergone."¹

The eagerness of the satyagrahi not to embarrass the adversary may be exploited by the latter to ruin the non-violent group. But the satyagrahi must not exercise the virtue of self-restraint to the extent of self-extinction or suicidal self-suppression, for then the virtue becomes a vice.² In case non-embarrassment is exploited by the opponent it becomes the clear duty of the satyagrahis to resist the aggressor non-violently and defend themselves. Says Gandhiji, "Defensive civil disobedience becomes a duty when insult or humiliation is imposed upon us by an opponent. That duty would have to be done whether the opponent is in difficulty or not."³

To sum up, when the enemy is in difficulty it is the duty of the satyagrahi to do what is morally necessary, though he must avoid what may not be morally indefensible but is calculated to vex and embarrass the opponent.³

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1. Quoted in *History of the Congress*, p. 665. In 1939 no doubt Gandhiji advised the suspension of civil disobedience in some of the native states where authorities were getting brutalised. But this suspension was due partly to lack of adequate training on the part of satyagrahis and partly to Gandhiji's desire for calm atmosphere in which he might think out a new orientation of civil disobedience. If the satyagrahis had been thoroughly disciplined presumably he would not have advised suspension. *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 159.
 2. *H.*, Sept. 22, 1940, p. 290.
 3. *H.*, Jan. 6, 1940, p. 404.

To the satyagrahi far more important than external conditions are internal conditions. In Gandhiji's words, "external difficulties need never frighten a satyagrahi. On the contrary, he flourishes on external difficulties and faces them with vigour."¹

As for satisfactory internal condition, the satyagrahi group should be well-disciplined. In the last chapter we have discussed what adequate discipline implies. In particular satyagrahis should take a real, living interest in the working of the constructive programme. Through this constructive service they should acquire control over violent elements in the masses so that they will remain at least passively non-violent so long as the non-violent resistance lasts. Besides, there should be in satyagrahis enough faith and discipline instinctively to await and obey the general's word. The satyagrahi army "should be so well prepared as to make war unnecessary."²

The sign of full preparedness is that suspension should never bring despondency and weakness in a satyagraha struggle.³ Even if people are ready and suspension is ordered through the miscalculation of the general, the movement should not be affected adversely, for "suspension of civil disobedience, if it resulted in accentuation of repression, would itself become satyagraha in its ideal form."³ On the other hand if suspension leads to desertion and disbelief it shows that deserters were only half-hearted satyagrahis and the movement would be the better without them.⁴ If, however, satyagrahis survive the depression of suspension it would be an unmistakable sign that they have imbibed the message of non-violence.⁵

In spite of all the precautions satyagraha on mass scale is a dangerous experiment and there is always the risk of an outbreak of popular violence. But as against this the leader

1. *H.*, March 30, 1940, p. 69.

2. *H.*, Dec. 2, 1939, p. 361.

3. *H.*, June 3, 1939, p. 147.

4. *H.*, April 1, 1939, p. 72.

5. *Specches*, p. 509.

has also to balance what is perhaps a greater risk—the certainty of popular rage generated by tyranny and injustice bursting into violence, or, what is worse, moral degradation due to the absence of an effective non-violent remedy in the face of a grave injustice.¹ Non-violent direct action avoids this violence as it enables the people to give such expression to their feelings as may compel redress. Thus opposition to immoral acts of the opponent may often become a duty in spite of the internal weakness of satyagrahis. Stressing this logic of overwhelming necessity even amidst uncongenial surroundings, Gandhiji once wrote, “If the Congress is goaded to it (civil disobedience), the science of satyagraha is not without a mode of application inspite of internal weakness.”²

Whether or not the opportunity is suitable for starting direct action is to be decided by the general. His decision would be based on the justice of the issue that is the cause of conflict and the state of the preparedness of the satyagrahis. So long as his preparations are incomplete he refuses to be goaded into precipitate action either by the pressure of the opponent, his oppression and tyranny, or by the clamour of his followers. Thus the satyagrahi general gives battle in his own time on the ground of his own choice. He retains the initiative in his own hands and never allows it to pass into the hands of the enemy.³

The leader retraces his steps and suspends direct action if he has been guilty of any miscalculation and if he finds the required spirit of non-violence lacking in satyagrahis and the community and there is a chance of demoralization.⁴ Gandhi-

1. *Speeches*, p. 509.

H., July 1, 1939, p. 182.

2. H., August 4, 1940, p. 234.

3. H., May 27, 1939, p. 143.

4. In 1922 Gandhiji was of opinion that civil disobedience could be stopped only by political and not non-political violence. In 1930, however, he relaxed and laid down that this time civil disobedience would continue in spite of violence. No doubt non-violence of the brave can neutralize any amount of violence. But with the Congress non-violence has been only a policy. Since 1934 his standard has again gone up and he has been insisting on the absence of violence as a necessary condition for the starting and continuance of civil disobedience. Violence, however, cannot stop individual civil disobedience as a purely defensive measure. *Y.I.*, I, p. 292 ; *Y.I.*, Jan. 23, 1930. *History of the Congress*, p. 645 ; H., Dec. 2, 1939, p. 361 and March 30, 1940 p. 69.

ji's Ahmedabad (1919), Bardoli (1921) and Patna (1934) decisions are instances of suspension.¹ Suspension of civil disobedience is not the suspension of satyagraha. It is merely changing the disposition of the non-violent forces from the work of cleansing to construction. Suspension is a strategic retreat for a more intensive preparation of the satyagrahi forces.

Non-violent direct action can be employed only for social good and not for immoral purposes. It cannot for instance be used to conquer a foreign country or establish an empire. For these violence is the only means.

The issue justifying direct action must be some serious grievance of the community. The grievance should so far as possible be simple, tangible, concrete and well-defined and not abstract and complicated. Mixing up of motives is damaging in satyagraha and an issue should not be a mere cloak for advancing an ulterior objective.² Gandhiji also advocates the satyagrahi group fighting for the irreducible minimum. For the satyagrahi this minimum, he says, is the maximum.³ The issue also must be within the power of the opponent to yield.⁴

In all the civil disobedience movements conducted by him or under his guidance Gandhiji has always taken care that the issue of the movement should not be confused with something different. In South Africa he refused to make common cause with the European strikers whose strike was not non-violent. In fact, he suspended the satyagraha strike of indentured

1. The suspension in 1919 was due to violence in Nadiad and Ahmedabad. Similarly the Bardoli suspension was due to popular violence at Chauri-Chaura, which had been preceded by other instances of political violence. Besides, in 1921 violence seemed to be on the increase and the discipline of the satyagrahis was too inadequate. The Patna (1934) decision was the recognition of the fact that the civil disobedience movement, being the non-violence of the weak, had weakened due to the severe repression of the Government. Today the soundness of these decisions of Gandhiji is almost universally admitted.
2. *H.*, May 27, 1940, p. 144.
3. *South Africa*, p. 319.
4. Mahatma Gandhi, *Constructive Programme*, p. 26.

Indians lest it be mistaken as being in alliance with that of the Europeans. In Champaran he took care not to give to the affair political and national colour.

Gandhiji's various non-violent campaigns also illustrate this double stress on concreteness and the restraint on demand, i.e., limited objective. Local campaigns are bound to be concrete. But the three all India movements also bear out the principle. The first movement was for the redress of the Punjab and the *Khilafat* wrongs, though in 1920 at the instance of Mr C. Vijayaraghavachariar and P. Moti Lal Nehru Gandhiji agreed to include *Swaraj* also in the demands.¹ In the second movement (1930-34) likewise, which he expected to be the final struggle for complete independence, he reduced his demand for *Swaraj* to the well-known eleven points. P. Moti Lal Nehru criticized him for thus lowering the national demand but soon realized that conceding the eleven points would mean conceding the substance of independence. He conducted the movement of 1940-41 to defend the right of free speech, which he calls the foundation-stone, the seed of *Swaraj*.² Speaking about the issue he said, "This liberty is a concrete issue which needs no defining. It is the foundation of freedom, specially when it has to be taken non-violently. To surrender it is to surrender the only means for attaining freedom."³ This is not to deny that the demand for *Swaraj* can legitimately form the issue of a non-violent conflict, but Gandhiji would like to reduce the demand to as concrete terms as possible. Even the last resolution of the A.I.C.C. (Aug. 8, 1942) put the demand for independence in the concrete context of the peril of war. The resolution demanded the immediate withdrawal of the British power from India as an urgent necessity, because "The continuance of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and contributing to the cause of world freedom." The end of British domination, the resolution asserted, was

1. *Experiments*, II, pp. 579-80.

2. *H.*, Aug. 22, 1940, p. 291.

3. *H.*, Aug. 22, 1940, p. 292.

necessary for the success of freedom and democracy, for only a free India could defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need.¹

His advice to the leaders of satyagraha movements in the Indian states has also been along these very lines. To give an instance, in 1939 his advice to the leader of the Travancore Congress was to forget for the time being *Swaraj*, to concentrate on the details of administration and to fight for the elementary rights of the people. He said, "The authorities won't be frightened, and it will give you the substance of responsible Government."²

People sometimes object to this policy. Concrete particular wrongs, they say, are but symptoms of a deeper malady. To isolate them and to try to deal with them separately is a disservice to the masses for it makes them lose sight of the real objective.

Gandhiji's views, however, are not only inseparably connected with his basic principles but possess great practical advantages also. Definiteness and concreteness, besides being in consonance with truth, leave no ground for misunderstanding and bring the problem within the comprehension of the masses affected, thus winning their support. Keeping the demand at the minimum convinces people of the *bona fides* of the satyagrahi group. To some extent it also allays the suspicions of the adversary. Aggression is violence and minimum demands are an indication of the essentially defensive character of satyagraha. Further, if on a definite, limited issue the masses are able to achieve success non-violently, the moral strength thus generated will enable them to set right more widespread grievances. Thus Gandhiji once remarked, "If I had only talked of *Swaraj*, I would have come a cropper. By attacking details we have advanced from strength to strength."³

Once the fight begins, the satyagrahi group, even if its strength increases, must not add to its demand without good

1. The A.I.C.C. Resolution in *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, pp. 52-55.

2. *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 175.

3. *H.*, June 24, 1939, p. 175.

reason. Thus grievances which existed when the satyagraha was launched and the removal of which was not included in the demand should not be brought in to enlarge the objective. On the other hand a breach of a promise or any other injustice done by the opponent to the satyagrahi community during the course of the struggle can legitimately give rise to new demands.¹

Regarding the form of resistance, the principles of individual action discussed in chapter VIII apply to group action also with necessary modifications. In satyagraha what is important is the spirit of non-violence rather than the isolated acts through which it is expressed. This is why Gandhiji insists on the satyagrahi leader being an out and out *ahimsaist*, for "without a living faith in it, he will not be able at the crucial moment to discover a non-violent method."² This also explains his great emphasis on the thorough discipline of the satyagrahis. Again this is the reason why he is so particular about the beginning in the non-violent campaign being well and truly made by purest of men. Beyond this, Gandhiji believes, circumstances differ from one instance of group satyagraha to another and even in the same movement the situation keeps changing and assuming new and unexpected aspects. Thus the satyagrahi general has to improvise his response according to the exigencies of the situation, depending on the purity of his vision and the keenness of his intuition. Just as a general of the ordinary army may alter his plans and orders according to the changing situation and the tactics of the enemy, so also the satyagrahi general. Over and above the situation outside the latter has also to examine himself and to listen to "the dictates of the innerself."³ It is unnecessary and impossible to visualise and draw up any detailed scheme of the resistance to cover all cases. To do so is to reduce a life-process to a set of cut and dried logical steps. Hence Gandhiji's much criticised "one-step-enough-for me" dictum.

1. *South Africa*, Ch. XXVII and XXXVIII.

2. *Y. I.*, Feb., 27, 1930.

3. *H.*, June 10, 1939, p. 158.

Thus he wrote in 1939, "Do not expect me to reveal how, if ever, I shall launch civil disobedience. I have nothing up my sleeve, and I will have no knowledge until the last moment. I am not made that way. I knew nothing of salt march until practically the moment it was decided upon. This I know that God has rarely made me repeat history and He may not do so this time."¹ We propose, therefore, to confine ourselves to general principles of corporate resistance as inferred from the past instances.

In chapter VII we have discussed the object of non-violent resistance, the test of the genuineness of resistance, and the importance of persuasion and efforts for compromise preceding the actual outbreak of hostilities. These equally apply to non-violent resistance on group scale.

Gandhiji attaches great importance to open-dealing in satyagraha. Upton Close once called him "the world's greatest example of political straight-forwardness, the only true follower of the ideal of open diplomacy openly arrived at."² Pursuit of truth at any cost is to him the only diplomacy and this rules out secrecy of all kinds. He wrote in 1931, "In the method we are adopting, fraud, lying, deceit and all ugly brood of violence and untruth have absolutely no room. Everything is done openly and above board, for truth hates secrecy. The more open you are, the more truthful you are likely to be."³

Absence of secrecy guarantees purity of means, for uncleanness shuns light and seeks secrecy. Open-dealing makes satyagraha a clean, open battle of defiance regardless of consequences. It is a symbol of moral superiority and appeals to the best in all concerned. It strengthens the morale of the satyagrahi rank and file. It enhances their dignity in the eyes of the public as well as the adversary whose morale, therefore, diminishes.

1. *H.*, December 2, 1939, p. 362.

2. Natesan, *Mahatma Gandhi, The Man and His Mission, Appreciations*, p. 30.

3. *Y. I.*, Dec. 21, 1931.

Open dealing also serves as an excellent propaganda. The news spreads far and wide and to some extent neutralizes the effect of subsequent censorship. Thus open dealing and eschewing secrecy are a practical proposition also. Indeed, as Gandhiji wrote in a recent statement, "No underhand or underground movement can ever become a mass movement or stir millions to mass action."¹

In all his campaigns in India as well as South Africa Gandhiji always informed the Government of his plans of campaign in advance. He believes that non-violent direct action would be morally defective if started without sufficient notice. But never before was he so thorough-going in this respect as in the individual civil disobedience movement of 1940-41. Detailed information was sent to the Government several days in advance by every satyagrahi about his contemplated civil disobedience. The Congress Committees were also forbidden to keep secret books or funds.²

Secrecy, on the other hand, carries the suggestion that the satyagrahi is afraid of the adversary and wants to escape punishment. It also shows the satyagrahi's eagerness to achieve quick results by even questionable means. Secrecy therefore, deprives satyagraha of its dignity, reducing it to a mere battle of wits. It is thus fatal to satyagraha.

In the second satyagraha movement (1930-34) when the repression of the Government became very severe satyagrahis fell back upon secret methods. But the movement began to slacken and demoralisation set in. Later Gandhiji held that the secret methods were largely responsible for the demoralisation of the masses.³

Gandhiji is indifferent to money and numbers in satyagraha. He has repeatedly observed that the success of satyagraha depends on moral and spiritual rather than material resources.

1. Gandhiji's statement dated Oct. 21, 1940.

2. *H.* April 13, 1940, p. 89.

3. His statement dated May 5, 1933.

It is not to suggest that he undervalues the co-operation of the masses. In his evidence before the Hunter Committee in 1919 he remarked that if he got a million men ready to act according to the principles of non-violence he would not mind enlisting them all.¹ He admits that the movement of mass satyagraha is impossible without mass discipline and mass support.² But numbers are a source of weakness when discipline is indifferent. Besides, satyagraha can achieve its object even without assuming the mass aspect. And its success depends not on force of numbers but on the capacity of satyagrahis, however small their number, to suffer for truth without ill-will for the adversary. To quote Gandhiji, "I attach the highest importance to quality irrespective almost of quantity. . . . Numbers become irresistible when they act as one man under exact discipline. They are self-destroying force when each pulls his own way or when no one knows which way to pull. I am convinced that there is safety in fewness so long as we have not evolved cohesion, exactness and intelligent co-operation and responsiveness."³ Again, "Numbers do not matter in satyagraha. Even a handful of true satyagrahis well organised and disciplined through selfless service of the masses, can win independence for India."⁴

Gandhiji's indifference to numbers is a corollary of his convictions regarding soul-force. The strength on which the satyagrahi relies is not the strength of his narrow, isolated, physical being but of his soul-force, which can defy the physical combination of a whole world. When one has an unflinching faith in soul and God one is self-sustained and gets the necessary support from within.

His emphasis on quality is also due to the fact that quality tends to multiply by its contagious example, while indifferent quantity is self-cancelling. This is the law of growth in satyagraha. It is by this logic of purity that in South Africa

1. *Y. I.*, I, p. 17.

2. *South Africa*, p. 204.

3. *Y. I.*, II, p. 503.

4. *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 67.

the number of satyagrahis which stood at 16 at one time swelled to 60,000 towards the close of the struggle.

Moreover, to the satyagrahi victory depends not on numbers but on withdrawing his co-operation from the evil-doer, on resisting him. So "for a fighter the fight itself is victory, for he takes delight in it alone. He believes that victory or defeat . . . depends upon himself."¹ Further, "as a civil resistance army is or ought to be free from passion, because free from the spirit of retaliation, it requires the fewest number of soldiers."²

Closely similar are Gandhiji's views on the place of money in satyagraha. He has raised crores for various causes and considers money "the sinews of war."³ In 1921 he appealed to the people to contribute to the Tilak Swaraj Fund as much as they could. In 1927 he wrote, "The fund has served an immense national purpose. The tremendous organisation that came into being all of a sudden could not have been created without this great national fund . . ."⁴ All the same Gandhiji is essentially indifferent to money, his attitude being determined by the ideal of non-possession. He believes that money plays the least part in satyagraha.⁵ It cannot by itself help forward a satyagraha movement. It is his conviction born of long experience that the satyagrahi must simply cease to depend on money, for no movement or activity which has at its helm true and good men ever stops or languishes for want of funds.⁶ On the other hand financial stability inevitably leads to spiritual bankruptcy.⁷

It is hardly necessary to add that satyagraha is inconsistent with pecuniary inducement to or hiring of volunteers. Adventurers participating on the ground of such selfish hopes will inevitably choke up the movement. There is, however,

1. *South Africa*, p. 394.

2. *Y. I.*, I, p. 935.

3. *Speeches*, p. 584.

4. *Y. I.*, III, p. 102.

5. *Experiments*, II, p. 433.

6. *South Africa*, p. 202.

7. *H.*, Dec., 10, 1938, p. 371.

nothing wrong in giving, wherever it is possible, bare maintenance to poor volunteers and, when these volunteers are imprisoned or killed, to their dependents.

It is largely due to Gandhiji that India's struggle for freedom has been so very inexpensive and the Congress can boast such a large number of honorary, selfless workers. Democracy which has been rendered so very undemocratic by the corrupting influence of wealth has much to learn from Gandhiji's sane attitude towards money.

Gandhiji holds that in a non-violent campaign the satyagrahi leader should, so far as possible, depend for men and money on the community or the area directly affected by the grievances which occasion the conflict. In his words, "It is the essence of satyagraha that those who are suffering should alone offer it."¹

Gandhiji's eagerness to localize satyagraha and to forbid external assistance is due to the fact that "The idea underlying satyagraha is to convert the wrong-doer, to awaken the sense of justice in him to show him also that without the co-operation, direct or indirect, of the wronged the wrong-doer cannot do the wrong intended by him. If the people in either case are not ready to suffer for their causes, no outside help in the shape of satyagraha can possibly bring true deliverance."¹ Thus the conversion of the wrong-doer can best be brought about by the sacrifice of the local people, the victims of the wrong-doer. The sacrifice of the outsiders interferes with the process of conversion and increases bitterness. Besides, the principle of self-reliance and local responsibility compels people to fight their own battle and draws out the powers latent in them. The people become conscious of their strength and are able to win their deliverance. No amount of outside help can be a substitute for this self-effort.

The important weapons of corporate action are non-cooperation, civil disobedience, fasting, *hijrat*, picketing economic boycott, and social ostracism.

¹ .H., Dec. 10, 1938, p. 369.

Non-co-operation, besides being a matchless weapon in dyadic relations, is also a sovereign political remedy.

Governments are neither infallible, nor do they have the right divine to govern wrong. Gandhiji thinks that the mainstay of a Government is neither force at its command, nor merely the passive consent of the people but their active co-operation. Withdrawal of co-operation and support by the people, therefore, means complete paralysis and the end of the political system. "Even the most despotic Government cannot stand except for the consent of the governed, which consent is often forcibly procured by the despot. Immediately the subject ceases to fear the despotic force, his power is gone."¹

Ordinarily it is the duty of the citizen to be law-abiding even as it is the duty of the Government not to flout the wishes, the interests and the moral sentiments of the people. But this obedience to the Government must not be uncritical and indiscriminate, for that is a sign of slavery. If the Government rides roughshod over the popular feelings, if its ways are immoral and unjust, it becomes the right as well as the duty of the people to non-co-operate with the Government. Says Gandhiji, ". . . it is a right recognised from times immemorial of the subjects to refuse to assist the ruler who misrules."² What is true of Governments also applies to other exploiting groups and organisations.

When practised against a Government, "The primary motive of non-co-operation is self-purification by withdrawing co-operation from unrighteous and unrepentent Government. The secondary object is to rid ourselves of the feeling of helplessness by being independent of all Government control or supervision, i.e., to govern ourselves in all possible affairs ; and, in fulfilling both the objects to refrain from doing or promoting injury, or any violence, to individual or property."³

1. *Y. I.*, I p. 205.

2. *Speeches*, p. 205.

3. *Y. I.*, I, p. 42.

This self-purification of satyagrahis means the growth of tremendous moral strength which brings the Government to its knees, compelling it to do justice. In case the Government persists in its immoral ways and refuses all redress, non-co-operation completely shatters the administrative machinery and paralyses the Government.

As the object makes it obvious, non-co-operation is not only negative, it is not only a deliberate 'no' from the people to the Government, it has also its positive side. Its external negative success is in proportion to this inward positive growth, the growth of co-operation among the people. This is why Gandhiji lays such great stress on the political education of the masses. But for their co-operation non-co-operation can neither be thorough-going nor non-violent and in either case it will not be effective. In the absence of this inward growth, even if non-co-operation were non-violent and effective, with the decline of the Government it would be impossible for non-co-operators to preserve the social order and the result would be anarchy. This is why non-co-operation has to be practised by the people consistently with their ability to preserve the social order.

That the chief motive behind non-violent non-co-operation is not hatred or exclusiveness, but a constructive urge, is brought out in the following passage from *Young India*, "There is no doubt that non-co-operation is an education which is developing and crystalizing public opinion. And as soon as it is organised enough for effective action, we have *swaraj*."¹

But the growth of this inward, co-operative aspect of non-co-operation must be voluntary. The satyagrahi must respect others' right of free opinion and free action and use only persuasion and argument to wean them from the wrong path. Forcing co-operation would be violence and violence only sustains and multiplies evil. Besides, voluntariness alone

can be a test of "popular feeling and dissatisfaction,"¹ and "those who call themselves non-co-operators from fashion or compulsion are no non-co-operators."² Non-co-operation to be non-violent, therefore, demands toleration of differences and due regard for the dissentient's liberty.

The non-violent methods which satyagrahis may employ to develop the non-co-operation movement are *hartal*, social ostracism, and picketing.

Hartal means cessation of business as a measure of protest. The object of a *hartal* is to strike the imagination of the people and the Government.³ But *hartals* should not be frequent otherwise they would cease to be effective.⁴ Besides, *hartals* should be absolutely voluntary. Abstention from work should be the result of persuasion and other non-violent methods of propaganda. Employees should not be asked to leave their work unless they receive permission from their employers.

Much more liable to abuse than *hartals* is social ostracism. Ostracism is violent or peaceful according to the manner in which it is practised. Gandhiji feels that in social life it is impossible to avoid ostracism to a certain extent, but it should not be used, except in a very limited sense, against black-legs in a community who defy public opinion, and do not adopt non-co-operation.

In India social boycott is a terrible and effective age-old institution, an institution coeval with caste. It is based on the notion that a community is not bound to extend its hospitality to the excommunicate. It answered when every village was a harmonious self-contained unit and the occasions of recalcitrancy were rare. But in complex conditions of modern India when opinion is divided on the merits of satyagraha, a summary use of this weapon in order to bend a minority to the will of majority is, according to Gandhiji, a species of unpardonable violence.⁵

1. *Y. I.*, I, p. 149.

2. *Satyagraha*, p. 24.

3. *Y. I.*, I, p. 23.

4. *Y. I.*, I, p. 258.

5. *Y. I.*, I, p. 299.

Non-violent social ostracism may, however, be resorted to in certain extreme cases "when a defiant minority refuses to bend to the majority, not out of any regard for principle, but from sheer defiance or worse."¹ But it "is applicable and effective when it is not felt as a punishment and accepted by the object of the boycott as a measure of discipline."² To be so accepted it must be non-violent, i.e., it must be civilized and must not savour of inhumanity. To be non-violent, "It must cause pain to the party using it, if it causes inconvenience to its object."²

Social boycott must not mean depriving a person of indispensable social services, e.g., asking his personal servant to give him up, stopping his food and cloth supply, depriving him of the services of a medical man, etc. To do so would amount to coercion and violence. Again, it would be an instance of violent ostracism if people in their impatience make the life of a person unbearable by insults, innuendoes and abuse. On the other hand, if a congregation refuses to recite prayers after a priest, who prizes his title above his honour, it would be an instance of peaceful ostracism. Similarly, there would be nothing violent if a person, who defies strong, clear public opinion on vital matters, is denied social amenities and privileges as against social services. Thus attendance at dinner parties and receiving of gifts are privileges which it is permissible to withhold. Even in this limited sense ostracism should be employed on rare and well-defined occasions and one who uses ostracism should, in every case, use it at his own risk.³

Picketing, when employed as a non-violent technique, should be only persuasive and never coercive. In the two non-violent movements of 1920-22 and 1930-34 Gandhiji advocated the picketing of liquor, opium and foreign cloth shops. In the second movement this was almost exclusively done by women. But Gandhiji has always discouraged

1. *Y. I.*, I, p. 298.

2. *Y. I.*, I, p. 300.

3. *Y. I.*, I, p. 302.

picketing in the sense of sitting *dhurna*¹ or in the sense of formation of a living wall of pickets in order to prevent the entry of persons into the picketted places. Gandhiji considers these forms violent. The object of peaceful picketing is not to block the path of a person wanting to do a particular thing but to rely on the force of public approbrium and to warn and even shame the black-legs.² Picketing should avoid coercion, intimidation, discourtesy, burning or burying of effigies, and hunger-strikes. Fasting has a place in picketing, only when it is resorted to in case of a breach of contract and when the parties respect and love each other.³

Non-co-operation, to develop which civil resisters employ the non-violent methods described above, culminates in civil disobedience. Thus Gandhiji wrote in 1930, "A little reflection will show that civil disobedience is a necessary part of non-co-operation. You assist an administration most effectively by obeying its orders and decrees."⁴ Even the worst State may have some good points. But if the State is corrupt people should reject the entire system.⁵

The details of this withdrawal of co-operation would vary according to the peculiar situation of a country. What is essential is the ability of the non-co-operators to endure, without violence and malice, punishment and provocation coming from the Government and the solid backing of the masses whose collective pressure is an important requirement of success.

1. *Dhurna* means sitting down or lying flat on the ground so as to block the passage of those who defy public opinion and invite them to go to their work by treading on the bodies of those sitting or lying. *Dhurna* is a coercive method of social constraint. Gandhiji considers *dhurna* a barbarity and a species of violence. It is a barbarity, because it is a crude way of using coercion. It is even worse than violence, for "If we fight our opponent, we at least enable him to return the blow. But when we challenge him to walk over us knowing that he will not, we place him in a most awkward and humiliating position." *Satyagraha*, p. 90.
2. *H.*, August 27, 1938, p. 234.
3. *History of the Congress*, p. 765 (see Gandhiji's instructions regarding picketing in 1931).
4. *Y. I.*, March 27, 1930.
5. *Y. I.*, Dec. 31, 1931.

Any detailed history of Gandhiji's non-co-operation movement of 1920-22 is outside the scope of this book. We may, however, briefly notice the various items that Gandhiji included in this movement which is the first instance of the use of the technique on a nation-wide scale.¹

As originally planned by Gandhiji and accepted by the Khilafat Committee, non-co-operation was to be practised in "fixed, definite, progressive four stages," i.e., giving up of titles and resignation of honorary posts, calling out of Government servants, the withdrawal of the police and the military, and the suspension of taxes.² Later on the first stage was elaborated to include the boycott of courts by lawyers and the general public, of schools and colleges by teachers and students, of legislatures by those elected and of elections by voters. Another important item in the first stage was the promotion of *swadeshi* including the renunciation of all foreign cloth in favour of the exclusive use of *Khadi*. The first stage also included resignations from nominated seats in local bodies, refusal to attend Government levees, *durbars* and other official or semi-official functions.

Every one of these negative steps was to be offset by its positive, constructive aspect so that by the time the Government was paralysed the parallel satyagrahi Government should be ready to take its place and keep intact the social order. Thus Gandhiji wrote in 1920, ". . . when we are ready to call out the Military and the Police on an extensive scale, we shall find ourselves in a position to defend ourselves. If the Police and the Military resign from the patriotic motives, I would certainly expect them to perform the same duty as national volunteers . . . The movement of

1. In an embryonic form the doctrine of non-co-operation is present in Gandhiji's *Hind Swaraj*. Thus "We consider your (British) schools and law-courts to be useless. We want our own ancient schools and courts to be restored. . . . We do not need any European cloth. We will manage with articles produced and manufactured at home. . . . If you (the British) act contrary to our will, we will not help you, and, without our help, we know that you cannot move one step forward." *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 90-1.
2. *Y. I.*, I, pp. 191-2.

non-co-operation is one of automatic adjustment. If the Government schools are emptied, I would certainly expect national schools to come into being. If the lawyers as a whole suspended practice, they would devise arbitration courts and the nation will have expeditious and cheaper method of settling private disputes, and awarding punishment of the wrong-doer."¹ Again, "*Swaraj* by non-violent means can, therefore, never mean an interval of chaos and anarchy. *Swaraj* by non-violence must be a progressively peaceful revolution such that the transference of power from a close corporation to the people's representatives will be as natural as the dropping of a fully ripe fruit from a well-nurtured tree."²

As for *swadeshi*, it automatically implies the boycott of those foreign commodities which are of universal use in a country and which must be locally produced. Foreign cloth is one such commodity, the boycott of which is an essential negative aspect of a non-violently planned economy. In 1920-22 Gandhiji advocated not only the boycott but also the destruction of foreign cloth and himself inaugurated cloth-burning in Bombay in July 1921.³

Non-co-operation was a new movement of its kind in India. There had been no adequate previous preparation for it in

1. *Y. I.*, I, pp. 641-42.

2. *Y. I.*, I, p. 293.

3. Mr C. F. Andrews questioned the ethics of burning "the noble handiwork of one's fellowmen and women, one's brothers and sisters abroad." Such burning seemed to him "something violent, distorted, unnatural" which would lead the country back to the "old bad selfish nationalism of the racial type so rampant in Europe." *Y. I.*, I, pp. 555-8. Gandhiji, however, defended the destruction as "a sound proposition from the highest moral standpoint." There was nothing racial or parochial about it because his emphasis was on foreign cloth and not British goods. In fact, destruction was transferring racial ill-will of India from men to things. Love of foreign cloth had brought foreign domination and economic ruin and was therefore an emblem of slavery and a mark of shame. The motive of burning was not hate but repentance for past sin. Burning struck the imagination of the people as nothing else could and made them earnest. It stood for the burning of India's taste for foreign fineries and was like a surgical operation necessary for the deep-seated disease. He would not permit their being given to the poor in India, for such ill-conceived charity would be against their patriotism, dignity and self-respect *Y. I.*, I, pp. 553-62.

the form of constructive work among the masses. The people had no experience of sustained organised political action and had not yet imbibed the message of non-violence. Besides, from the very beginning violence seemed to haunt the movement at every step. Naturally therefore Gandhiji was anxious "to take the minimum risks and to call for the least sacrifice compatible with the attainment of the desired object."¹

Due to this political inexperience of the masses the beginning, Gandhiji said, should be made by the well-to-do classes and the masses should come in when later stages were reached. Besides, the first stage, with which the struggle commenced, mostly concerned the classes. The earlier stage was a way of preparing the masses for non-violent action. Gandhiji depended on the classes making a good beginning and the masses catching the spirit of non-violence and being led by the classes. For later stages his hope lay with the masses and these stages were to begin when the masses had been trained in non-violence. But the non-violence of the educated classes was only skin-deep because they had adopted the non-violent technique only as a measure of expediency. This was a serious handicap to the movement, for the classes with their halting, hesitating non-violence of the weak could hardly inspire the masses.

Being eager to avoid violence at any cost Gandhiji was naturally very cautious and slow about the later stages of non-co-operation. As regards calling out of Government servants he insisted that no pressure should be put upon any person to withdraw from Government service. Government servants were not to be called out until they were capable of supporting themselves and their dependents or the nation was in a position to find occupation for such men. All classes were not to be called out at once. Private employees serving the English were not to be touched because the movement was

1. *Speeches*, p. 542.

not anti-English.¹ Gandhiji described the third stage, the withdrawal of the police and the military, a distant goal. The fourth, i.e., suspension of taxes, he considered still more remote. The organisers were not likely to embark upon it unless they could do so with the assurance that there will be no violence offered by the people.²

Later Gandhiji, the All India Congress Committee, and the Working Committee invited Government servants, even the police and the military, to resign and to support themselves by other occupations, spinning and weaving, for instance.³ But on the whole Gandhiji followed a very cautious policy in regard to these two stages and intensive propaganda among the police, the military and other services was never carried on, the reasons being the inability of the Congress to support the servants called out and the fear of violence.

But though these two stages remained unrealized, suspension of taxes, in the beginning considered to be "still more remote", came very near being fulfilled. In 1921 the Government started intense repression to suppress the movement. As a reaction to this there arose in various provinces a demand for starting civil disobedience. In October 1921 the Working Committee authorized civil disobedience by individuals who might be prevented in the prosecution of the *swadeshi* propaganda.⁴ On 5th November, 1921, the All India Congress Committee extended the scope of civil disobedience and permitted provinces on their own responsibility to undertake, in addition to individual civil disobedience, also mass civil disobedience including non-payment of taxes in selected districts or tehsils which conformed to the conditions concerning non-violence, communal unity, the adoption and manufacture of *Khadi* and untouchability.⁵ The movement was to start on the 7th February, 1922, in Bardoli. In the Madras Presidency 100 villages in Guntur would have

1. *Y. I.*, I, p. 191.

2. *Y. I.*, I, p. 192.

3. *Y. I.*, I, p. 1030.

Resolution of the All India Congress Committee passed in July 1921. *History of the Congress*, p. 361.

The statement of the Working Committee dated 5th October, 1921. *History of the Congress*, p. 366.

4. *History of the Congress*, p. 367. 5. *Ibid.*, p. 368.

followed suit and the movement would have spread throughout the country.¹ In fact, in Guntur taxes had been withheld in anticipation of Gandhiji's sanction and not even five per cent of the taxes had been collected so long as the Congress ban was operative.² But the outburst of violence at Chauri Chaura, which had been preceded by violent scenes at Bombay, Madras and other places, led to the suspension of the mass civil disobedience. The sudden suspension disappointed the country, the Government intensified its repression, Gandhiji and other leaders were sent to jail and the movement slackened. In November 1922, on the recommendation of the Civil Disobedience Committee, the All India Congress Committee passed a resolution that the country was not yet prepared for civil disobedience. By then 30,000 men had gone to jail.

The second non-violent movement (1930-34) was predominantly a civil disobedience movement and began where the first movement (1920-22) had ended. This movement also adopted some important items of the earlier non-cooperation movement. Thus the boycott of schools, colleges and courts, of foreign cloth and liquor, invitation to Government officials to resign, calling out the legislators—all these were duly emphasized. The boycott of foreign cloth was very intense, widespread and effective. One note-worthy feature of this movement, so far as the technique of non-cooperation is concerned, was that after Gandhiji's arrest on May 4th 1930, the Congress undertook a vigorous boycott of British goods as well as British banking, insurance, shipping and other institutions.³

1. Gandhiji's idea seems to have been that civil disobedience should be adopted by district after district after it had succeeded in Bardoli and the neighbourhood. Mr Krishnadas reports him saying, "when the *Swaraj* flag floats victoriously at Bardoli, then the people of the Taluqa next to Bardoli, following in the steps of Bardoli, should seek to plant the flag of *Swaraj* in their midst. Thus district after district, in regular succession, throughout the length and breadth of India, should the *Swaraj* flag be hoisted." *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi*, I, p. 374.
2. *History of the Congress*, pp. 390-1 & 398.
3. Resolution 11 and 12 of the Working Committee, May 1930, and Resolutions 1 and 2 of the Working Committee, June 27, 1930. See *History of the Congress*, p. 673 and 683-4.

Gandhiji had never countenanced such comprehensive boycott before. As we have pointed out in chapter IV he considered it punitive and, therefore, violent. This change was made in his absence and, maybe, without his approval. But immediately after his return from London, in January 1932, the Working Committee once again sanctioned this extension and presumably Gandhiji agreed to it ; for the committee could not have disregarded the wishes of the general on the eve of the renewal of conflict. The relevant resolution was : " Even in non-violent war boycott of goods manufactured by the oppressors is perfectly lawful, inasmuch as it is never the duty of the victim to promote or retain commercial relations with the oppressor. Therefore, boycott of British goods and concerns should be resumed and vigorously prosecuted."¹

Gandhiji, it seems, now believes that the economic boycott² can and should be used as a non-violent non-coercive measure of non-co-operation with the tyrant, the emphasis being on the moral aspect of the boycott. The difficulty arises from the fact that the boycott to be effective requires unanimity to achieve which the satyagrahi is tempted to use even questionable means of social constraint. Thus ill-will is aroused ; the emphasis tends to shift from undertaking suffering to heaping it on the opponent ; and the high idealism of satyagraha is toned down. On the other hand to carry on trade with the evil-doer is to co-operate with him and to be an accessory to his immorality. Besides, ill-will and violence can be minimized if satyagrahis are well disciplined.

Similarly by a resolution passed on June 27, 1930, the Working Committee called upon " the people to organise and enforce a strict social boycott of all Government officials and others known to have participated directly in the atrocities committed upon the people to stifle the national movement."³ This was passed during Gandhiji's absence in jail and was

1. *History of the Congress*, p. 870.

2. For his views on the use of boycott against international aggression see ch. IX *infra*.

3. Resolution No. 3 of the Working Committee, June 27, 1930, *History of the Congress*, p. 684.

contrary to his views on social boycott discussed earlier in this chapter. On his return from the Round Table Conference the Working Committee modified its earlier instructions by reminding people that, "Social boycott with the intention of inflicting injury on Government officers, police or anti-nationalists should not be undertaken and is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of non-violence."¹

Civil disobedience is the logical conclusion, the last stage, the most drastic form of non-co-operation. Gandhiji calls it "a complete, effective and bloodless substitute of armed revolt."² The earlier stages of non-co-operation are a preparation for it. The effective use of the less drastic stages of non-co-operation against the Government is bound to bring the satyagrahi in conflict with the laws of the State.

Civil disobedience, being a quicker and more drastic remedy than the other stages of non-co-operation, is fraught with greater danger and requires to be handled much more cautiously. "By its very nature, non-co-operation is open to children of understanding and can be safely practised by the masses. Civil disobedience presupposes the habit of willing obedience to laws without fear of their sanctions. It can therefore be practised only as a last resort and by a select few in the first instance at any rate."³ Both these aim at paralysing an unjust, immoral, i.e., undemocratic Government which opposes the declared will of the people and at replacing it by a satyagrahi system. Almost complete unanimity is necessary for the success of non-co-operation (i.e., its stages other than civil disobedience); while civil disobedience can neither be expected to be, nor need be, so widespread to be effective.

Gandhiji defines civil disobedience as the "the breach of unmoral statutory enactments."⁴ Civil disobedience, he says, signifies "the resister's out-lawry in a civil, i.e., non-violent manner."⁴ Civil disobedience is really a synthesis of civility

1. *History of the Congress*, p. 869.

2. *Y. I.*, I, p. 938.

3. *Y. I.*, I, p. 223.

4. *Y. I.*, I, p. 22.

and disobedience, i.e., non-violence and resistance. Resistance to bad laws is essential for man's moral growth, while civility is the demand of a stable social order without which man's life and growth are not possible.

Disobedience is in itself destructive and anti-social. But obedience to an immoral law is even worse and can never be a duty. A law to be worthy of obedience must be moral and democratically formulated. Even in a democracy in extreme cases if a citizen cannot get an immoral law repealed through constitutional means, he should disobey the law in order to be loyal to his own conscience. This conflict of loyalty so rare in a democratic State is the constant feature of a satyagrahi's life in undemocratic States and in countries under foreign subjection. Disobedience to immoral laws of the State is really obedience to a higher moral law, the law of truth and justice. Civil disobedience is thus an effort to reconcile the demands of freedom and law.

But civil disobedience is a risky, delicate weapon and should be employed with the greatest caution and most sparingly. Says Gandhiji, "... its use must be guarded by all conceivable restrictions. Every possible provision should be made against an outbreak of violence or general lawlessness. Its area as well as its scope should also be limited to the barest necessity of the case."¹

Its use to be healthy and creative greater emphasis should be laid on the adjective civil than on the substantive disobedience.² Civil is the very opposite of criminal, uncivil and violent. Criminal disobedience is licence, lawlessness and death even as civil disobedience is, freedom, growth and life. Civil means strictly non-violent. "Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well-understood principle, must not be capricious and above all, must have no ill-will or hatred behind it."³ Civility does not mean "mere out-

1. *Y. I.*, I, p. 944.

2. *H.*, April 1, 1939, p. 73.

3. *Y. I.*, I, p. 57.

ward gentleness of speech cultivated for the occasion, but an inborn gentleness and desire to do the opponent good.”¹ Disobedience is not civil if the object is embarrassment of the opponent or private material gain in place of “self-suffering for securing relief.”² It cannot be civil unless the resister has disciplined himself and the atmosphere around is tranquil and non-violent. This means that disobedience to be civil must have been preceded by civil obedience. As Gandhiji discovered in 1919 after Nadiad and Ahmedabad outbursts of violence, it is a Himalayan blunder to place the remedy of civil disobedience in the hands of those who lack the habit of willing obedience to law without fear of their sanctions. Those only attain the right to offer civil disobedience who have known how to offer voluntary and deliberate obedience to even irksome laws imposed by the State so long as they do not hurt their conscience or religion.³ Over and above this spontaneous and intelligent obedience to the law of the State Gandhiji also demands of individuals and groups intending to offer civil disobedience to undergo a rigorous discipline through adequate practice of the constructive programme and acquire non-violent control over the general public. Resisters must be ready quietly to bear all punishments and stand all repression till the oppressor is tired and the object of the satyagrahi gained. Lastly disobedience to be civil must also be public and made especially known to those interested in arresting the satyagrahi.⁴

Of late Gandhiji has been putting very great stress on the need of adequate discipline as the pre-condition of civil disobedience. According to him quality should be the prime consideration. Civil disobedience thus no doubt becomes “a very dear commodity.” But such civil disobedience will be, according to Gandhiji, infinitely more effective and faster-moving than the alloy which often passes for civil disobedience.⁴

1. *Experiments*, II, p. 435.

2. *Y. I. I.*, p. 39.

3. *Y. I. I.*, p. 932 ; *Experiments*, II, Ch. XXXIII.

4. *H.*, April 1, 1939, p. 72.

In civil disobedience if the beginning is properly made and discipline is adequate mass disobedience continues to be non-violent even in the later stages when leaders are all in jail and the movement is largely self-regulated.

Disobedience may be directed either against some particular unjust or immoral measures of a State or against the laws of a State in general. The object of civil disobedience in former case is to compel a Government to withdraw an unjust law or order, in the latter to paralyse a corrupt Government and to set up a non-violent State in its place. When aimed at a particular wrong or evil civil disobedience can also be offered without regard to effect, by way of self-immolation to rouse local consciousness or conscience.¹ Such was the case in Champaran when Gandhiji offered civil disobedience without any regard to the effect and well knowing that the people might even remain apathetic.¹ The satyagraha of South Africa, Bardoli, and Khera aimed at the relief of particular grievances. The individual civil disobedience of 1940-41 was against the restrictions imposed by the Government on freedom of speech in India. The recent movements of civil disobedience in Rajkot, Travancore, Jaipur and many other native states had as their object the wresting from the rulers unwilling hands the rights of self-government. The non-violent movements of 1920-22 and 1930-34 also aimed at destroying the British Government in India and setting up parallel satyagrahi institutions. Similarly the object of the non-violent mass struggle contemplated in the A.I.C.C. resolution of August 8, 1942 was the immediate withdrawal of the British power from India.

Whether the object be particular or general laws to be disobeyed have to be selected with great discrimination. The satyagrahi may not break laws which lay down moral principles. He may disobey those laws which are harmful to the people. There are also laws which are neither good nor bad, moral nor immoral. These enable the Government to exercise its authority and are obeyed by the people for the

1. Mahatma Gandhi, *Constructive Programme*, p. 26.

supposed good government of the country. The breach of these will not harm the people but will immensely increase the work of the administration. It would be legitimate for the satyagrahi to disobey these laws, for an unjust Government loses its right to the obedience of the people. The laws selected should also be such that the largest number of people can participate in civil disobedience. Thus the authority of the State should be challenged in every way which does not involve violence or moral turpitude.¹ Gandhiji's choice of the salt law for the civil disobedience movement of 1930-34 was an ideal choice. Scores of other laws can be disobeyed and thus the existence of a corrupt State ignored and its authority denied.

Civil non-payment of taxes is one of the quickest methods of overthrowing a Government and holds out the temptation of ready response. But it is fraught with greatest possibility of violence unless masses are 'saturated with the principle of non-violence.' This is why Gandhiji considers it as the last stage which should be tried only after other forms of civil disobedience. Civil non-payment is for those who have been in the habit of paying taxes regularly, understand the reason and virtue of civil non-payment, have acquired the necessary non-violent discipline and are prepared to stand, with calm resignation, the confiscation of their property.²

The selection of laws to be broken should be made not by each satyagrahi for himself but by the leader or some central body of experts. But for this restriction on individual liberty in the interest of discipline every satyagrahi may become a law unto himself and the result may be anarchy or criminal disobedience.³

Gandhiji draws a distinction between individual and mass civil disobedience and offensive or assertive and defensive civil disobedience. On February 25, 1922, the All India

1. *Speeches*, p. 458 and *H. March* 18, 1939, p. 53.

2. *Y. I.*, I, pp. 947-51.

3. *Y. I.*, I, p. 18.

Congress Committee defined these aspects of civil disobedience thus :

“ Individual Civil Disobedience is a disobedience of orders or laws by a single individual or an ascertained number or group of individuals. Therefore a prohibited public meeting where admission is regulated by tickets and to which no unauthorised admission is allowed is an instance of individual civil disobedience, whereas a prohibited public meeting to which the general public is admitted without any restriction is an instance of mass civil disobedience. Such civil disobedience is defensive when a prohibited public meeting is held for conducting a normal activity, although it may result in arrest. It would be aggressive if it is held not for any normal activity, but merely for the purpose of courting arrest and imprisonment.”¹

According to Gandhiji, “ The chief distinction between mass civil resistance and individual civil resistance is that in the latter every one is a complete independent unit and his fall does not affect the others ; in mass civil resistance the fall of one generally adversely affects the rest. Again in mass civil resistance leadership is essential, in individual civil resistance every resister is his own leader. Then again, in mass civil resistance there is a possibility of failure ; in individual civil resistance failure is an impossibility. Finally, a State may cope with mass civil resistance, no State has yet been found able to cope with individual civil resistance.”² Gandhiji believes that civil disobedience is essentially an individual affair and so long as there is even one civil resister offering resistance, the movement of civil disobedience cannot die and must succeed in the end.”²

According to Gandhiji, “ Aggressive, assertive or offensive civil disobedience is non-violent, wilful disobedience of laws of the State whose breach does not involve moral turpitude and which is under-taken as a symbol of revolt against the

1. *Y. I.*, I, p. 1019.

2. *Poona Statements* (the correspondence between Mahatma Gandhi and Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru.), p. 11.

State. Thus disregard of laws relating to revenue or regulation of personal conduct for the convenience of the State, although such laws in themselves inflict no hardship, and do not require to be altered, would be assertive, aggressive or offensive civil disobedience."

"Defensive civil disobedience, on the other hand, is involuntary or reluctant non-violent disobedience of such laws as are in themselves bad and obedience to which would be inconsistent with one's self-respect or human dignity. Thus formation of volunteer corps for peaceful purposes, holding of public meetings for like purposes, publication of articles not contemplating or inciting to violence in spite of prohibitory orders, is defensive civil disobedience. And so is the conducting of peaceful picketing undertaken with a view to wean people from things or institutions picketed in spite of orders to the contrary."¹

The right to offer aggressive civil disobedience accrues after severest discipline. The non-violent raids of 1930 on Government salt depots at Dharsana and Wadala by thousands of satyagrahis are instances of aggressive as well as mass civil disobedience.²

Gandhiji calls offensive civil disobedience "a most dangerous weapon."³ Defensive civil disobedience is forced on the satyagrahi when he is not permitted to prosecute his ordinary peaceful activities or when insult and humiliation are imposed upon him. So it cannot be postponed and is always welcome. Indeed it is a duty which has to be done even if the opponent is in difficulty, for "An opponent in difficulty may not expect people to obey unjust or humiliating laws or orders."⁴ Aggressive civil disobedience, whatever the object of satyagrahis, embarrasses and vexes the opponent and should be avoided if the latter is in difficulty.

1. *Y.I.*, I, p. 983.

2. The highest figure of satyagrahis in these non-violent raids stood at 15,000 in the mass action at Wadala on 15th June, 1930. *Mahatma Gandhi, The Man And His Mission*, cited above, pp. 134-5.

3. *Y.I.*, I, p. 987.

4. *H.*, January 6, 1940, p. 404.

But offensive civil disobedience obviously does not mean launching an offensive without any serious grievances. That would make disobedience criminal. Offensive civil disobedience only implies the violation of some particular law not because that law is in itself some striking provocation but because the satyagrahis have rebelled against the Government.

Individual satyagraha when practised by a group is a corporate technique. Even in mass satyagraha Gandhiji starts from a small beginning and gradually develops the movement. Though he has led several mass civil disobedience movements he is conscious of the low moral tone of group behaviour. He distrusts mass emotions of the moment which are susceptible to suggestions inciting them to violence. Hence his great emphasis on adequate discipline as the pre-requisite of mass civil disobedience. In the absence of adequate discipline there is a great risk of the magnitude and excitement of a mass conflict leading resisters astray and of disobedience becoming violent. The risk is increased by the fact that, unlike individual civil disobedience which is often vicarious, for individuals undergo suffering to remove some grievance of the masses, mass civil disobedience is often selfish in the sense that participants expect personal gain from disobedience.¹

In the anti-war satyagraha of 1940-41 Gandhiji evolved a new technique of individual satyagraha. The object of this technique was to minimise violence and to bring into action the purest form of non-violence possible. He concentrated on quality and permitted quantity only so far as it did not compromise the former. The issue of the conflict was "the right to preach against war as war or participation in the present war", i.e., "the right to preach non-violence through non-violent means."²

He started the movement as representative civil disobedience. In its original conception the movement was limited to two or three persons.³ Then it was extended to those who

1. *Speeches*, p. 637. 2. *H.*, October 20, 1940, p. 330.

3. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *Gandhi and Gandhism*, I, p. 186 (Gandhiji's letter dated Nov. 20, 1940).

held certain elective posts, i.e., the members of the Working Committee, the All India Congress Committee and of the central and provincial legislatures. Then came the turn of the members of provincial and local Congress Committees. Later any member of the Congress who had signed the satyagraha pledge could offer civil disobedience. But nobody was obliged to court imprisonment merely as a matter of discipline.¹ The name of the satyagrahi had to be approved by Gandhiji and also the way of his offering civil disobedience.² Thus all the Congressmen could join the movement, though civil disobedience was to be offered not in mass formations but singly by specified individuals.

For offering satyagraha Gandhiji approved only the individuals who subscribed to non-violence not only as a means of winning the country's freedom and regulating relations between religious and social groups in the country but also in its application so far as possible in free India, and who implicitly followed the constructive programme as an integral part of non-violence. The satyagrahis were required to be habitual *khadi* wearers and regular spinners and had to give details of spinning they had done. They were also required to be whole-time constructive workers and to keep a diary of

1. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

2. According to Gandhiji the best and the easiest way was to repeat the following slogan to passers-by as the resister walked on in a particular direction until he was arrested. The slogan was : "It is wrong to help the British war effort with men or money. The only worthy effort is to resist all war with non-violent resistance." The slogan was to be translated into the language of the province in which civil disobedience was to be offered. Gandhiji's preference for this method was due to the fact that it was harmless, economical and effective and rivetted attention on the single issue of war. Further the method reduced the movement to its simplest terms and prevented it from lapsing into mass civil disobedience. Gandhiji also advised the resisters to make it clear in their speech and action that they were neither pro-Fascism nor pro-Nazism but that they were opposed either to all war or at least to the war conducted on behalf of British Imperialism. They sympathised with the British in their effort to live but they wanted also to live themselves as members of a free nation and must not be expected to help Britain at the cost of their own liberty. See the instructions issued by Gandhiji to civil resisters in the movement of 1940-41, quoted in *extenso* in *Gandhi and Gandhism*, I, cited above, pp. 182-4.

their day's work. The selection of a candidate depended on the approval of his diary by Gandhiji. After a certain stage there was automatic selection: all the released satyagrahis offered satyagraha except those who stayed out due to their inability to continue. In this movement Gandhiji ruled out mass action and the usual forms of non-co-operation in order not to embarrass the Government. Even this symbolic disobedience was an embarrassment to the Government, but Gandhiji held that civil disobedience in this case meant assertion of the right to speak against participation in this war or all wars. "If I cannot do even this much when the occasion demands it we might as well give up non-violence. Civil disobedience is the assertion of a right, which the law should give but it denies. If the performance of a duty caused embarrassment it cannot be helped."¹

Gandhiji did not intend the movement to create an appreciable impression upon the war effort. The movement was a moral endeavour to dissociate India from the war effort to which she was never invited to be a party and a token of the yearning of the Congress to achieve the freedom of the country.¹ The excellence of the technique lay in the fact that the masses could participate in the movement and yet the risks of violence were minimised.

Hijrat which means voluntary exile is another form of collective as well as individual satyagraha. The emigration of the Plebians to secure rights from the Patricians of Rome, the planned flight of Israelites, Mohammad's flight from Mecca to Medina, the emigration of Puritan fathers from England and of Doukhobors from Russia are some historic instances of *Hijrat*, though all these are not cases of non-violent *Hijrat*.

1. Gandhiji's statement dated April 21, 1941. About 30,000 satyagrahis participated in the movement. In December 1941 the Government released the satyagrahis as a gesture of peace. The movement was not revived later because the Japanese reached very near India's borders and the Congress became preoccupied with the problems of self-sufficiency and self-defence.

People of Bardoli, Borsad and Jambusar in Gujarat employed the technique of mass *Hijrat* in 1930 as a protest against the inhuman oppression of the Government directed against the no-tax campaign. These peasant satyagrahis migrated from the Bombay province to the territory of the neighbouring Baroda state.¹

Gandhiji recommends *Hijrat* to those who feel oppressed, cannot live without loss of self-respect in a particular place and lack the strength that comes from true non-violence or the capacity to defend themselves violently.²

Thus if civil disobedience fires the blood-lust of the tyrant, and his terror and oppression become unbearable and are likely to make satyagrahis angry or weak, Gandhiji's suggestion to the latter is self-imposed exile from the tyrant's territory even at the cost of hearth and home and all other earthly belongings. But such a step should not be taken thoughtlessly as a dramatic gesture. It must be taken only when it so hurts the satyagrahi's moral being to submit to the tyrant's wrong-doing that he would rather die than lose his self-respect.³

Hijrat was his advice to the satyagrahis of Bardoli in 1928 and of Limbdi, Junagad and Vithalgad in 1939.⁴ In 1935 he advised the Harijans of Kaitha to migrate, as the caste Hindus of the place were regularly terrorising over them and this had caused extreme despondency among the Harijans.⁵

Obviously the bravest course for satyagrahis would be cheerfully to suffer the worst repression and melt the heart of the evil-doer. But this lacking there is nothing wrong, dishonourable, or cowardly in self-imposed exile. It is the non-violent way out of an unbearable plight. As a form of non-co-operation the technique is of a very limited value when employed against a State. The State may not permit

1. *History of the Congress*, pp. 701 & 706.

2. *H.*, February 3, 1940, p. 435.

3. *H.*, May 20, 1939, pp. 133-4.

4. *H.*, May 20, 1939, p. 133 ; *Y.I.*, III, pp. 1035-6.

5. *H.*, October 5, 1935, p. 268.

the migration of the people *en masse*. Even if it did, approximate unanimity, so essential for the success of non-co-operation, is so difficult in the case of *Hijrat* due to man's innate love for his hearth and home. Within big States, however, minorities in particular areas, discontented with the dominant social group, may seek relief by intra-State migration.

CHAPTER X

SATYAGRAHA AS CORPORATE ACTION

NON-POLITICAL CONFLICTS AND CRITICISM

The corporate technique discussed in the last chapter can be employed not only in political conflicts but also against economic, religious and social injustice.

All exploitation which is rooted in selfish, divisive ideas and attitudes implies co-operation between the victim and the victimizer. The way out for the victim is to withdraw this co-operation and to appeal through voluntary suffering to the heart and the head of the opponent and thus help him to see his mistake and correct it. Gandhiji does not accept the belief that the exploiter is beyond reform. To him the exploiter, no matter whether the capitalist, the landlord or the religious fanatic, is essentially a man who cannot shake himself free of his spiritual nature and is always capable of conversion. Violent means, besides being the monopoly of the exploiter, would deepen antagonism and perpetuate exploitation. Exploitation and injustice can be ended only if the conflict is resolved on the constructive, moral plane where the appeal of integrating, suffering love can irresistibly act on the mistaken wrong-doer and the public opinion.

In modern conditions a non-violent struggle against exploiting economic or social groups will in all likelihood bring the non-violent resisters in conflict with the State and the conflict will assume political colour. Widespread social and economic injustice is a sure index of the undemocratic nature of the State. An undemocratic political system can only live by aligning itself with other exploiters in society. On a vital

social or economic issue an undemocratic Government will as a measure of self-preservation try to keep down the non-violent aggrieved. So in broad outlines the technique of resistance will be the same whatever be the nature of the issue.

Gandhiji has himself fought several non-violent battles on social and economic issues. The issue of his earliest non-violent direct action in South Africa was socio-economic in nature. It was a successful effort of the small Indian population, consisting largely of labourers, to save itself from the tyranny of the dominant social group, the Europeans. Similarly the satyagraha at Vykom (in the Travancore State) was also successfully fought, under Gandhiji's guidance, to remove the social tyranny of the caste Hindus and vindicate the civil rights of the untouchables.

For a social group subjected to an unjust discriminating treatment the most effective way of redress is some form of non-violent resistance. Gandhiji has often explained how violent social outbreaks, Hindus-Muslim riots and the like, can be quelled non-violently. In 1938 to deal non-violently with communal disturbances he advocated the formation of peace brigades, i.e., corps of volunteers pledged to non-violence in thought, word and deed. In the case of a disturbance, if persuasion fails, Gandhiji expects these satyagrahis to act as shock troops and make an offering of themselves in the conflagration. They should cheerfully bend their heads to receive violent blows of the infuriated combatants and thus try to save the situation. But to be successful these satyagrahis must have qualified for this sacrifice by a long period of peace propaganda and of self-less constructive service of the various communities in the locality. In this service there should be no distinction between one's own co-religionists and others belonging to different faiths.¹

Gandhiji believes that no issue is better suited for the exercise of the spiritual weapon of satyagraha than the religious.²

1. *H.*, July 21, 1940, p. 215 ; July 13, 1940, p. 200 ; March 26, 1938, p. 54.

2. *H.*, April 27, 1939, p. 143.

But satyagraha in pursuit of a religious as opposed to a mundane object calls for greater discipline and precision than ordinary satyagraha. In 1939 he laid down some conditions for this kind of satyagraha. According to him religious satyagraha should on no account be used as a cloak for advancing an ulterior political or mundane objective. The leader of this satyagraha should be a true man of God, preferably a *brahmachari*, who will compel the reverence and love even of the opponent by the purity of his life, the utter selflessness of his mission and the breadth of his outlook.¹ Everybody participating in the movement must be a believer and practiser of the particular religion for which the movement is launched. Satyagrahis must have absolute belief in *ahimsa* and God and must have equal respect and regard for the religious convictions and susceptibilities of those who profess a different faith from theirs. This satyagraha must not lay emphasis on numbers and external aids and avoid aggressiveness, demonstrations and show. It must above all be a process of self-purification.

In recent years there have been two instances of religious satyagraha in India—the satyagraha of Akali Sikhs (1921-24) in the Punjab and the Arya Satyagraha (1939) in the Hyderabad state. None of these had the advantage of Gandhiji's guidance. In fact Gandhiji disapproved of the methods, though not the object, of Arya Satyagraha² which depended largely on outside aid and was of the passive resistance type.

Satyagraha of Akali (reformist) sikhs (1921-24) had the encouragement of Gandhiji. It was in the beginning a movement for the reform of *gurdwaras* which had large endowments. The Akalis came in conflict with the Government which supported the established *mahants* who controlled these funds. After a severe non-violent struggle the Government had to yield and to recognize the right of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, elected by sikhs, to the possession of the historic *gurdwaras*.

1. *H.*, April 27, 1939, p. 144. 2. *H.*, August 19, 1939, p. 241.

As for the economic sphere, non-violence rules out capitalism and the *zamindari* system. The land should belong to the actual cultivator and no cultivator should have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living.¹ Production should be on the basis of cottage industries carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. The indispensable large scale production should be nationalized and should be managed jointly by the State and the representatives of workers.¹ But this goal cannot be reached in a day, and exploitation, capitalism and land-lordism are hard realities of modern economic life.

Gandhiji's way to deal with economic conflicts is not class struggle and the extermination of haves by have-nots but class-collaboration and class-co-ordination as the first step towards the classless democracy in which every one will perform some form of productive physical labour and there will be no exploiters. Gandhiji is against the extermination of the capitalist and the *zamindar* because no human being is beyond redemption even as "no human being is so perfect as to warrant his destroying him whom he wrongly considers to be wholly evil." The *zamindars* need not be expropriated if their mentality changes and if they work as trustees of peasants, supply brains to them and remove the present terrible inequality between themselves and peasants.² For bringing about trusteeship which is the negation of the right of private property Gandhiji would recommend to the farmer the method of non-violent resistance which would either mend or else destroy the system without harming the *zamindars*.³ "He (the peasant) has so to work as to make it impossible for the landlord to exploit him."⁴

1. *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 96. The article entitled *Jaiprakash's Picture*.

2. *H.*, April 23, 1938, p. 85.

3. *Y.I.*, November 26, 1931.

4. Gandhiji's statement dated Oct. 27, 1944. In June 1942 Gandhiji conceded that land must be confiscated without compensation, it being financially impossible to compensate landlords. He also held that in a free India peasants would seize the land and this process may even involve some violence. (See Louis Fischer, *A Week with Gandhi*, pp. 54, 90-91). In 1935 also he had expressed the opinion that if it was unavoidable he would support confiscation by the State with the minimum exercise of

The question of legislative expropriation can hardly enter practical politics before India acquires political freedom. But even for the redress of serious agrarian grievances non-violent resistance is an unfailing remedy in the hands of farmers. Champaran (1917), Kheda (1918) and Bardoli (1928) are some of the instances of successful non-violent direct action in the agrarian sphere. The issue of Champaran satyagraha which Gandhiji considers as the most perfect demonstration of non-violence¹ was the unbearable hardship and oppressive exactions to which the peasants were subjected by Indigo planters. In the end the Government had to remove the grievances which had not been redressed for a hundred years. The Kheda satyagraha was undertaken by Gandhiji for getting the revenue assessment for the year suspended due to crop-failure. The Bardoli satyagraha, a model of intensive organisation and thorough planning, was undertaken by 88,000 peasants under the leadership of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to protest against the Government's arbitrary unwarranted enhancement of land revenue. The Government with all its mighty resources and in spite of a frightful reign of terror failed to crush the no-tax campaign and had to yield to practically all the demands of the satyagrahis. The Government had also to restore the forfeited lands of satyagrahis which had been sold out and to reinstate the village officials who had resigned in protest.

Similarly Gandhiji believes that the capitalist can render useful service to society if he can rise to real paternal or fraternal attitude towards labour and raise the latter to the status of co-proprietor of his wealth.² In a recent statement he observed that labour should be "master of the means of production instead of being the slave that it is. Capital should be labour's servant, not its master."³ Besides,

violence. (See N. K. Bose, *An Interview with Mahatma Gandhi* in *Modern Review*, Oct. 1935). Ideally non-violence rules out forcible ejection of landlords by peasants. (See Gandhiji's statement, Oct. 27, 1944). But Gandhiji is no doctrinaire and to him man and his happiness are the supreme consideration.

1. *H.*, April 4, 1939, p. 332.

2. *Y.J.*, III, p. 736.

3. Gandhiji's statement, Oct. 27, 1944.

both labour and capital should act as mutual trustees and trustees of consumers.¹ If both these act as trustees and view their interests in the context of the larger interests of the community, industrial conflicts will become infrequent and lose much of their bitterness.

Labour should have a right to share in the administration and control of industry, adequate leisure, wholesome conditions of life, a living wage and full rights of citizenship. Efforts should be made to raise the moral and intellectual level of the worker so as to enable him to acquire his deserved status. In particular he should be made conscious of his duty from the performance of which rights follow as a matter of course.² For removing legitimate grievances labour should resort to non-violent strikes to compel capital to submit to arbitration. But the non-violent strike should not be confused with its Western prototype. The latter is non-violent in appearance rather than spirit. Hatred and the desire to subdue the opponent make the Western type of strike an instance of what Gandhiji calls passive resistance. Strikers in the West use the control over labour supply to coerce the capitalist into submission. Some Western critics of the strike, who question its ethical validity, consider it a means of coercion rather than persuasion and conversion. Thus to Dr John H. Holmes the strike "is revolt in terms not of suffering but of conquest." It is, according to him, developing "into a weapon of violence used in the spirit and to the ends of war."³

The satyagrahi strike seeks, on the other hand, to be non-violent in spirit as well as method. It is voluntary, purifactory suffering undertaken to convert the erring opponent. The important conditions of a successful non-violent strike are as under :⁴

(1) The cause of the strike must be just.

1. *H.*, June 25, 1938, p. 162.

2. Gandhiji's statement, Oct. 27, 1944.

3. Quoted by C. M. Case in *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 297.

4. For the conditions see *Experiments*, II, pp. 412-3 and *V.I.*, I, pp. 730-41.

- (2) Strikers should never resort to violence.¹
- (3) They should never molest blacklegs.
- (4) They should be able to maintain themselves during the period of strike without falling back upon union funds and should therefore occupy themselves in some useful and productive temporary occupation. They should never depend upon alms.
- (5) They should remain firm, no matter how long the strike continues. Unless labourers find their own support rather than depend on the resources of the union, the strike cannot be prolonged indefinitely and "no strike can absolutely succeed which cannot be indefinitely prolonged."²
- (6) There should be practical unanimity among the strikers.
- (7) A strike is no remedy when there is enough other labour to replace strikers. In that case, in the event of unjust or inadequate wages or the like, resignation is the remedy.
- (8) Workers should on no account strike work without the consent of their union.
- (9) Strikes should not be risked without previous negotiations with the millowners on the basis of an unalterable minimum demand.

Gandhiji is against sympathetic strikes. He believes that a non-violent strike should be limited to those who are labouring under the grievance to be redressed. This is only the application of Gandhiji's principle of non-dependence on external aid to economic conflicts. If the object is conversion and not embarrassment or coercion the only suffering that will be effective is self-suffering. In some rare instances, however, sympathetic strikes do become a duty. Thus if the masters of one factory combine with those of another in which workers are on strike due to a legitimate grievance,

1. Gandhiji permits non-violent picketing (discussed in Ch. IX above) in the course of strikes.
 2. *Speeches*, pp. 786-7.

it is the duty of the workers in the former factory to combine with the strikers.¹

Gandhiji is also against labour strikes for political purposes until labourers understand the political condition of the country and are prepared to work for the common good. This should not be expected of them unless they have bettered their own condition and have learnt how to secure the redress of their own just grievances. To precipitate labour strikes from a political motive so long as labour is politically ignorant is to exploit labour and to embarrass the Government and both are species of violence. The politics of labour "should be of its own free choice and its political activity should be in the service of a clearly understood and consciously accepted purpose."²

Ordinarily strikes should take place for the direct betterment of labourers. When labourers have acquired the spirit of patriotism strikes may also take place for preventing profiteering on the part of capitalists, regulation of prices and the maintenance of proper proportion between prices, dividends and wages.³ Strikes should be few and far between and as labour becomes more organised arbitration should replace strikes. In Ahmedabad Gandhiji has demonstrated how the principle of arbitration can work to the benefit of labour as well as capital.

Successful use of the methods of strike and arbitration requires well-organised labour unions which will make workers conscious of their strength. But this organisation must be along non-violent lines. It must be grounded in firm faith in the possibility of co-ordination between labour and capital. The Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association, which works under the guidance of Gandhiji and is the most powerful labour union in the country with a membership of 55000, is essentially a non-violent labour organisation. One of the objects of the Association is to secure the nationalization

1. *Y.J.*, II, p. 953.

2. G. L. Nanda, *Gandhian Way in the Labour Movement in Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Sep. 24, 1944.

3. *Y.J.*, I, pp. 737-41.

or the textile industry in due course.¹ Many Western observers, e.g., Harold Butler, Braislford, Tom Shaw, Gilbert Slater, etc., have admired the indigenous character of the association and its system of joint arbitration and conciliation fostered by the influence of Gandhiji.

In the case of failure of arbitration the constitution of the Association provides for recourse to a strike. The Association has conducted a number of strikes also and with gratifying results in most cases. Gandhiji's stress on the vital importance of internal improvement in genuine social change finds expression in comprehensive work of the Association for the welfare of labour. The welfare work of the Association cost Rs. 86,000 in 1943-44 and approximately Rs. 14 lacs during the last twenty-five years.² To build up the non-violent strength of the worker the Association explores all the avenues of his uplift and keeps in close touch with almost every aspect of his life. Since 1937 the Association has also been training its members in a supplementary occupation in addition to their principal occupation in the mills so that in case of a lock-out or strike or loss of employment otherwise they will have something to fall back upon instead of being faced with the prospect of starving.³ If Gandhiji had his way he would regulate all the labour organisations of India after the Ahmedabad model.⁴

Satyagraha as corporate action has been subjected to severe criticism. It is sometimes decried as destructive of law and order, unprogressive and unconstitutional.

Civil resistance would be destructive of social order and unprogressive if it were criminal law-breaking. But the two are poles apart. The criminal or the ordinary law-breaker breaks the law surreptitiously and tries to avoid the penalty. The civil resister is law-abiding not because he fears punishment but because he considers the law good for

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1. This object was adopted by the Association in 1926 at the instance of Gandhiji.
 2. G. L. Nanda, *Charter for Labour in Gandhiji, His Life and Work*, p. 189.
 3. *H.*, July 3, 1937, p. 161.
 4. Gandhiji, *Constructive Programme*, p. 21.

social welfare. He openly and civilly breaks a law if it is so unjust as to offend his moral sense and if all his efforts to get it modified fail, and then he quietly accepts the punishment. Indeed his disobedience itself is rooted in the satyagrahi's law-abiding nature which extracts from him implicit obedience to the highest law, i.e., the voice of conscience which overrides all other laws.¹ Criminal disobedience no doubt leads to anarchy. But Civil Resistance, though it aims at destroying immoral laws and an unjust order, neither creates lawlessness nor is unprogressive.

While fighting against injustice, untruth and exploitation which give rise to disorders and conflicts civil resistance evolves a superior, just social order based on truth and non-violence. Thus it minimises, instead of giving rise to, lawlessness.

Besides, even if civil resistance caused a slight loosening of social order, it is necessary to remember, as some social thinkers point out, that phenomena like duelling, smuggling, crime, litigation, evasion of unpopular taxes etc. are social realities against which law is helpless and which form whole blanks rather than single cases with which the Rule of Law is interspersed.² Some loosening of social cohesion is an essential feature of transition to new and fuller forms of social life and should not be confused with social dissolution and anarchy.

As for its being unconstitutional or otherwise, believers in the theory of absolute sovereignty hold that laws of the State are the highest arbiter of the conduct of the citizen irrespective of the conformity of the laws to the general interests of the community. They inculcate an absolute obligation of submission to the State and consider as unconstitutional any claim of moral right against its laws. The validity of the absolutist view is questioned by Pluralists and others. To many of these thinkers the problem of political obligation

¹ *Speech*, pp. 457 and 504-5.

² Carl Brinkman, *Recent Theories of Citizenship* and C. F. Merriam, *Political Power*, Ch. VI.

is essentially moral ; the State possesses no peculiar merit ; and its right to the allegiance of the citizen is dependent on the moral adequacy of its laws. " Our first duty," Laski writes " is to be true to our conscience."¹

To Gandhiji, also the question of political obligation is essentially moral and " disobedience to the law of the State becomes a peremptory duty when it comes in conflict with the law of God."² According to him, satyagraha will be unconstitutional " when truth and its fellow self-sacrifice become unlawful."³

Gandhiji would consider the Governmental machinery itself as unconstitutional if it is undemocratic and rooted in injustice and exploitation. Civil resistance is the most constitutional and sacred duty of the people towards such a Government.⁴

Even from the point of view of absolutists persuasion to educate public opinion is everywhere considered constitutional, and non-violent direct action is only the most effective form of persuasion, being the appeal of the suffering love to the head through the heart. Even if the satyagrahi is mistaken, his resistance harms none but himself, for he proceeds by self-suffering. His opposition to the established order is moral and not physical. It is an effort to convince the opponent rather than destroy him.

Further, every law gives the individual the option either to obey the law or in the alternative to suffer the penalty for disobedience. In the case of immoral laws or if the Government is corrupt the satyagrahi chooses the second alternative and willingly accepts the punishment imposed by the State.⁵

1. H. J. Laski, *The Grammar of Politics*, p. 289.

2. *Ethical Religion*, p. 47.

3. *Y.I.*, III, p. 1043.

4. *Speeches*, p. 532. *Y.I.*, I, p. 938.

5. *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 70-1.

It may be pointed out that General Smuts, Gandhiji's adversary in South Africa, considered the satyagraha movement there as a constitutional movement. *Speeches*, p. 480. Lord Hardinge, the

As is well known the Magna Carta and the Declaration of the Rights of Man legalised the right to resist the State under certain circumstances. Chapter 61 of the Magna Carta, which is still, in the words of Hallam, the keystone of English liberty, appointed a committee of 25 barons with recognised rights of resistance to the king as a means of enforcing the provisions of the charter.¹

If the absolutist attitude which swears by the sanctity of the constitution irrespective of its nature and of the quality of Governmental activity were to be accepted as valid, Government would become the sole judge of what people ought to think, all democratic movements in countries which do not enjoy self-government would be ruled out and political progress would become impossible. The right to resist the State is, indeed, the sovereign remedy in the hands of the oppressed to put an end to the tyranny of unjust rulers. It is the best guarantee of constitutional Government. That is why history has never condemned as unconstitutional successful instances of even violent rebellions.

then Viceroy of India, also approved of Gandhiji's satyagraha in South Africa. Charles E. Merriam describes Gandhiji's system of civil disobedience as being "within the borders of legality." See his *Political Power*, p. 174. Sir Stafford Cripps considers as legitimate the use of general strike by the working class in a democracy under certain conditions. C. R. Attlee holds that in the absence of democratic means of redress resort to unconstitutional, even violent, means to bring about fundamental change is inevitable. Richard Acland (Ed.), *Why I am a Democrat*, contributions by C. R. Attlee and Sir Stafford Cripps.

1. Gniest holds that the resistance conceded in Chapter 61 was in harmony with the legal conceptions of the feudal State of the Middle Ages based on compact. (Rudolph Gniest, *History of the English Constitution*, 2nd ed. Vol. I, pp. 306-7). Commenting on Chapter 61 Adams observes, "The feudal law of Western Europe recognised the right of the vassal to renounce his allegiance and to make war on his Lord to protect himself from injustice. In no such case could he be charged with treason. The barons were at the moment acting upon this right . . ." The Magna Carta, according to Adams, lays down two fundamental principles which lie at the present day, as clearly as in 1215, at the foundation of the English Constitution, and of all constitutions derived from it. First that "There is a body of law in the state, of rights belonging to the subjects or to the community, which the King is bound to regard"; and second that "if the King will not regard these rights he may be compelled by force, by insurrection against him, to do so." G. B. Adams, *Constitutional History of England*, pp. 129-30 and 137-39.

Gandhiji, however, does not consider as constitutional wrestling of justice by violent means. According to him, injustice cannot be cured by violence.

Civil resistance is undoubtedly dangerous for an autocratic State, but it is harmless to a democracy which is willing to submit to public opinion. It educates and strengthens public opinion and sets right abuses. To Gandhiji "Civil Disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen . . . to put down Civil Disobedience is to attempt to imprison conscience."¹

Most modern States are either undemocratic or at best democratic in form rather than in spirit. But even in a predominantly non-violent State non-violent resistance will be morally justified. Such a society may minimize the need of direct action. But the mode of human association will always admit of continuous growth, and so there will always be room for the use of suffering love as the best means of perfecting social life.

Non-violent direct action is often mistaken for an unconstitutional method, for it is regarded to be coercive as against constitutional methods which depend on persuasion. The critics of non-violent resistance reject as unreal any distinction between the effects, on the adversary, of violent and non-violent actions. To them non-violence is a form of coercion. Some of its advocates also argue that because non-violence is a form of coercion, injustice should be fought non-violently so far as possible and violently when necessary.

Thus Arthur Moore considers satyagraha as "mental violence" and "a method of fighting which is open to unarmed people" and which "is not a distinctively spiritual weapon any more than is armed rebellion or war." He rejects the claim that satyagraha is on a high ethical plane or that it is applied Christianity or something nobler still.² C. M. Case differentiates between persuasive suffering and

1. *Y.I.*, I, p. 943.

2. Sir S. Radhakrishnan (ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 192-3.

coercive suffering. The former is the passive resistance of the olden type which seeks to produce in the mind of the one appealed to a change of mental attitude without the use of coercion. Non-co-operation, strike and boycott are, according to him, forms of coercive suffering. Coercion, he says, may be either moral or physical. Non-co-operation, strike and boycott are instances of coercion because in them suffering is self-inflicted with the express purpose of producing a dilemma in the mind of the opponent. Neither of these alternatives appeals to the opponent's desire or his judgment, yet he is compelled by the situation to choose between them. No act or threat of physical force or violence is used against him on the one hand, nor is he persuaded of the excellence of either alternative on the other. Whichever he accepts of the alternatives he remains unconvinced. Thus he is coerced, though non-violently coerced.¹ Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru also believes that non-violence coerces as well as violence, sometimes even more terribly.²

Mr Moore's denial of the moral superiority of satyagraha rests on his mistaken view that satyagraha is "mental violence." To Gandhiji mental violence will turn an apparently non-violent act into *duragraha* or passive resistance.

Gandhiji would accept Mr Case's distinction between persuasive and coercive suffering, but he would not put satyagraha in the coercive category. Mr Case puts non-violent non-co-operation in the same group with strike and boycott as practised in the West. His treatment of strike and boycott makes it abundantly clear that these are non-violent, not in Gandhiji's sense, but only in appearance.³ Gandhiji considers boycott and strike, as practised in the West, examples of passive resistance and not satyagraha. The two, i.e., satyagraha on the one hand, and boycott and strike as forms of passive resistance on the other, resemble in so far as they avoid physical violence, but there is vital difference between

1. C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 402.

2. See his *Autobiography*, p. 539.

3. C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, pp. 295-346.

these two agencies of social pressure and the effects of the two are sufficiently distinct to be indicated by separate terms.

The most important difference between these two is that satyagraha seeks to avoid not only physical but also mental violence on moral considerations, while strike and boycott as forms of passive resistance avoid physical violence on grounds of expediency. Thus in satyagraha the motive must not be violent, while boycott and strike confine themselves to the external act, ignore the motive and, short of openly resorting to physical force or its threat, use all the forms of social constraint.¹ As a result of this difference in satyagraha the brunt of suffering is borne by the satyagrahi, in boycott and strike the incidence of suffering is reversed. In strike and boycott none of the alternatives, i.e., the demand of the resisters and the pressure they exert, appeals to the opponent's judgment and he has to choose between the two evils.² In satyagraha the demand is kept so transparently, so unquestionably, legitimate and morally conducive to the welfare of both the parties that even when the opponent, under the stress of self-interest, resists the satyagrahi's demand he is conscious of the intrinsic moral correctness of the latter's demand and behaviour. Thus the satyagrahi wins by sapping the moral defences of the opponent, and the pressure of the former's resistance, though it is compelling, is persuasive. Strike and boycott, on the other hand, frighten the opponent by the prospect of suffering and loss and coerce him. The effect of satyagraha is non-violent moral pressure which is unifying and elevating, while the effect of boycott and strike is psychic violence which is divisive and morally degrading.

The effect of boycott and strike, unless they eschew all violence, may rightly be called psychic or non-physical coercion. It, however, creates confusion of thought and is unscientific to put these two distinct social forces, i.e., satyagraha and passive resistance (boycott and strike) in the

1. For difference between satyagraha and passive resistance also see above, pp. 117-119.

2. C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, p. 318.

same category.

It is incorrect to describe the effects of non-violent direct action even as non-violent or moral coercion. In common as well as political parlance the term 'coercion' usually signifies compulsion by the use of physical force or by the threat of its use. As interpreted by dictionaries also the term is associated with physical violence.¹ Violence stands for exploitation of men and their use as mere means which is ruled out by non-violence. Due to its association with physical violence, the use of the term 'coercion' to indicate the effect of non-violent resistance gives the wrong impression that violent resistance and non-violent resistance are essentially indistinguishable. It also hinders clear, accurate thinking.

We have distinguished above between moral pressure of non-violence and non-physical coercion of passive resistance. There is even greater difference between non-violent pressure and physical coercion. Gandhiji explains the difference between the two forces and their respective reactions thus : "Violent pressure is felt on the physical being and it degrades him who uses it as it degrades the victim, but non-violent pressure exerted through self-suffering, as by fasting, works in an entirely different way. It touches not the physical body but it touches and strengthens the moral fibre of those against whom it is exerted."²

1. According to Webster's *Dictionary* 'coercion' means "the application to another of such force, either physical or moral, as to induce or constrain him to do against his will something that he would not otherwise have done." *The Oxford English Dictionary* and *A New English Dictionary* (edited by Sir James Murray) emphasize the association of violence with 'coercion'. According to them 'to coerce' means "to constrain or restrain (a voluntary or moral agent) by the application of superior force, or by authority resting on force ; to constrain to compliance or obedience by forcible means ; to keep in order by force..." ; 'coercion' means "constraint, restraint, compulsion, the application of force to control the action of a voluntary agent . . . ; government by force as opposed to that which rests upon the will of the community."
2. Quoted by P. Jawaharlal Nehru in his autobiography, p. 537. This is how C. E. M. Joad brings out the difference between these forces : "Physical force bestows power, which may be defined as the ability to make other men do your will for fear of the consequences, if they do not . . . moral force exerts not power but influence, which may be defined as the effect produced by one human being upon the

In his speeches and writings Gandhiji always disclaims coercion and compulsion as elements in satyagraha. We quote here a few relevant passages from his writings :—

“We cannot organise public opinion in a violent atmosphere . . . those who call themselves non-co-operators from fashion or compulsion are no non-co-operators. . . . We must therefore eliminate compulsion in any shape from our struggle.”¹

“We must not resort to social boycott of our opponents. It amounts to coercion. . . . The rule of majority, when it becomes coercive, is intolerable as that of bureaucratic minority.”²

“But there should be no coercion in *Khaddar*-wearing as in any thing also.”³

During the civil disobedience movement of 1930 he wrote, “we may not use compulsion even in the matter of doing a good thing. Any compulsion will ruin the cause. . . . This is a movement of conversion, not of compulsion even of the tyrant.”⁴

“There is no such thing as compulsion in the scheme of non-violence. Reliance has to be placed upon the ability to reach the intellect and the heart.”⁵

“Non-violence is never a method of coercion, it is one of conversion.”⁶

“The satyagrahi’s object is to convert, not coerce, the wrong-doer.”⁷

But though he avoids the use of the words “coercion” and “compulsion,” he does employ the word “compel” to

mind and actions of another, not through fear of punishment or hope of reward, but by virtue of the latter’s intuitive acknowledgement of intrinsic superiority.” Sir S. Radhakrishnan (Ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 158.

1. *Satyagraha*, pp. 24-5.

2. *Y.I.*, I, p. 961.

3. *Y.I.*, II, p. 507.

4. *Y.I.*, April 17, 1930.

5. *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 192.

6. *H.*, July 8, 1939, p. 193.

7. *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.

indicate the effect of satyagraha. By "compelling" he means exerting moral pressure or influence with the object of evoking the best.

Thus in 1920 referring to the Viceroy's speech in the legislature he wrote, "The remarks on the Punjab mean a flat refusal to grant redress. . . . The immediate future is to compel repentance on the part of the Government on the Punjab matter."¹

Again, "I have therefore ventured to suggest the remedy of non-co-operation . . . which, if it is unattended by violence and undertaken in an ordered manner, must compel it (the Government) to retrace its steps and undo the wrongs committed."²

". . . each party helping the other, we shall compel the Government to accede to the minimum joint demands of all the parties."³

Even the word "compel" is an ambiguous word. A more precise term that Gandhiji sometimes uses to indicate the effort of non-violence is "moral pressure." Thus referring to his Rajkot fast he said, "If my fast, which I hope will be avoided, is to be interpreted as pressure, I can only say that such moral pressure should be welcomed by all concerned."⁴

No doubt the three kinds of social restraint i.e., non-violence, non-physical violence and physical violence shade off into one another in marginal cases and the line of demarcation gets blurred and is difficult to discern. But to describe the effects of non-violence by the term "coercion" which is associated with violence is unscientific and leads to confusion. Thus people sometime argue that both non-violence and violence are forms of coercion and when one fails the other may be employed. We suggest that the effects of the

1. *Y.I.*, I, p. 133.

2. *Y.I.*, I, p. 220.

3. *Y.I.*, II, p. 260.

4. *H.*, March 11, 1939, p. 46.

three kinds of resistance may be termed as moral pressure in the case of non-violence, non-physical coercion in the case of passive resistance and coercion in the case of violence.

Critics often question the universal applicability of corporate non-violence to all group conflicts. They point out that the moral tone of the behaviour of groups, specially large ones, is extremely low. Under excitement of emotions masses lose all restraint and cannot be depended upon to resort to direct action against the exploiters without being provoked into retaliation. Thus non-violent corporate action is an impossibility.¹

Gandhiji is fully alive to the facts that groups are less responsive to moral considerations than individuals and that it is far more difficult for large groups of men than for isolated individuals to acquire the necessary non-violent discipline. But he does not discount the possibility of large groups being trained in the way of non-violence. He refuses to believe that non-violence is only for the individual and that non-violence on mass scale is against human nature.² He maintains that non-violence can be exercised by individuals as well as by groups, even by millions together.³

The weakness of large masses of men for violence is due to lack of self-control and discipline on the part of the members of these groups and of the non-violence of the brave in the leaders. With well-planned, thorough-going discipline spread over a long period and with the right type of leaders this weakness for violence can be brought under control. The fact that it is possible to train effectively large groups for violent warfare shows that they can be trained for non-violent group action also. Military training aims at controlling and disciplining the emotion of fear and the corresponding urge to flight. These are closely allied to the parallel emotion of anger and the urge to pugnacity. Both the emotions and urges are divisive. Fear is

1. M. Ruthnaswamy, *The Political Philosophy of Mr Gandhi*, pp. 57-8

2. *Y.I.*, Jan. 2, 1930. *H.*, Oct. 12, 1935, p. 277.

3. *H.*, Jan. 6, 1940, p. 403.

aroused by the stronger adversary and anger by the weaker. The non-violent training involves a thorough control of these divisive emotions and urges.

The existence and progress of mankind show that love, co-operation and allied non-violent attitudes preponderate over anger, fear and other violent emotions and attitudes. Non-violent discipline should therefore, be more in consonance with human nature and, therefore, easier, more enduring and more practicable than military discipline.¹

That large masses of men can be disciplined to act non-violently under the gravest provocation is proved by successful instances of mass action at Dharsana, Bardoli, in the Frontier province and South Africa.

According to Gandhiji the discipline which is the moral pre-requisite of collective satyagraha can be acquired by every individual and does not require a high level of culture or education or any other extraordinary capacity. That the backward unlettered Indian coolies of South Africa, the peaceful peasants of Bardoli, and the ferocious blood-thirsty Pathans of the Frontier Province have alike made well-disciplined soldiers of Gandhiji's non-violent army is ample evidence of the validity of his claim.

After a thorough investigation of historical and biographical facts concerning passive resisters and of psychological and statistical evidence concerning 'conscientious objectors' C. M. Case has arrived at the conclusion that both these classes of people are entirely normal in their native physical and mental equipment and non-violent behaviour is the result not of inborn but of acquired traits.² We believe

¹ One important factor in group behaviour is what Professor Giddings calls, "the consciousness of kind". This group consciousness or group solidarity sustains and reinforces for better or worse individual sentiments. The individual as a member of the group with which his sentiments tally can not only inflict but also undertake suffering more easily than he can as an isolated individual. Thus non-violence can also benefit from what may be called "group contagion".

² C. M. Case, *Non-violent Coercion*, chapters X & XI.

that results obtained by a similar enquiry regarding *satyagrahis* in India will not alter Mr Case's conclusion with respect to the psycho-physical normality of non-violent resisters.

It has also been suggested that non-violence may succeed against a mild enemy like the English who recognize that the game of insurrection and repression has rules and who have streaks of humanity and liberalism. But it would have little chance of success against the pitiless might, the systematic and remorseless terror, the brutality and ferocity of totalitarian dictators.¹

The tremendous improvement of social techniques, particularly the military technique and the technique of propaganda, has no doubt immensely increased the power of the control group running the government to secure the general acquiescence of the masses. But as Bertrand Russell points out, it is still a doubtful question as to how far, and for how long, State propaganda can prevail against the self-interest of the majority.² In recent times it has proved powerless against national feeling ; it has also difficulty in prevailing against strong religious feeling.² The only sure method of suppressing opposition is the extermination, by the government, of all the people opposing it. But efforts at ruthless and total suppression are unlikely to succeed because persecution emphasizes the significance of the cause of the oppressed. Further, no government can subsist for a long time merely on the basis of force. To live it must secure the consent of the people, either in the form of active participation of the people in the political life of the State or in the form of passive acquiescence born of a conviction that the government aims at the good of the governed. Thus to secure consent it has to be humanitarian which makes total extermination impossible. Beside, the *technique of coercion* calls into

1. Sir S. Radhakrishnan (Ed.), *Mahatma Gandhi*, Essays by Romain Rolland, Edward Thompson and Arnold Zweig ; Kenneth Ingram, *The Defeat of War*, p. 73.

2. Bertrand Russell, *Power*, p. 102.

being a counter *technique of freedom*.¹ This is why "Power is not strongest when it uses violence, but weakest."²

Gandhiji does not believe in the omnipotence or permanence of arbitrary authority. According to him satyagraha is self-sufficient and does not depend for its success on the mildness of the adversary. In Chapter VII we have dealt with Gandhiji's views on the moral and psychological working of satyagraha in conflicts.³ The various movements of non-violent resistance led by Gandhiji in South Africa and India bear ample testimony to the unique capacity of satyagraha for winning adherents, building up morale and invoking sacrifice, arousing public opinion and weakening the adversary.⁴ Gandhiji believes that the reaction of satyagraha is subject to the law of progression or the law of growth which applies to every righteous struggle but is an axiom in the case of satyagraha. "This (progress) is really inevitable and is bound up with the first principles of satyagraha. For in satyagraha the minimum is also the maximum, and as it is the irreducible minimum, there is no question of retreat, and the only movement possible is an advance."⁵

In one of his speeches in 1919 he remarked, "My experience of satyagraha leads me to believe that it is such a potent force that, once set in motion, it spreads till at last it becomes a dominant force in the community in which it is brought into play, and if it so spreads no Government can neglect it."⁶

1. E. A. Ross, *Social Control*, p. 387 ; Charles F. Merriam gives a brief account of the forms, violent and non-violent, which the technique of freedom usually assumes in *Political Power*, Ch. VI.

2. *Political Power*, cited above, pp. 179-80.

3. See above, pp. 131-34.

4. Niebuhr gives an important reason for the weakening of the adversary in non-violent resistance. According to him the most important of all the imponderables in a social struggle is the moral conceit by which an entrenched and dominant group identifies its interests with the peace and order of society and which gives to the group the clearest and the least justified advantage over those who are attacking the *status quo*. "The latter are placed in the category of enemies of public order, of criminals and inciters to violence and the neutral community is invariably arrayed against them." One great advantage of the temper and the method of non-violence in social conflict is that they destroy the plausibility of the moral conceit of the entrenched interests. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 250.

5. *South Africa*, pp. 319-20.

6. *Speeches*, pp. 449-50.

To suggest that satyagraha might avail against a mild adversary like the English but is bound to fail against the brutalized hordes of the modern dictators is to betray an ignorance of the basic principles of satyagraha. Satyagraha would not be worth much if its effectiveness were confined to the mild and the just and if it broke down against the tyrant. Being soul-force, "superiority over physical strength, however overwhelming, is the core of *ahimsa*. . . ."¹ According to Gandhiji, "Even a heart of flint will melt in front of a fire kindled by the power of soul. Even a Nero becomes a lamb when he faces love."² The reason is that man is greater than his deeds and, even when most depraved, he has, due to the spiritual element in him, limitless capacity for reform and regeneration. Suffering is the unfailing instrument of the satyagrahi to evoke the best in the opponent. In inflicting suffering on the satyagrahi the opponent helps in his own defeat. Thus the satyagrahi thrives on repression and no amount of violence can crush him. In the duel between violence and non-violence, Gandhiji holds, the latter must always come out victorious in the end. There is no such thing as defeat or failure in satyagraha because in non-violence to suffer is to win. The struggle may seem to be a slow, long drawn process, but it is the swiftest, for it is the surest. There may be apparent defeats for the satyagrahi. But these are only temporary setbacks from which he extracts valuable lessons to guide him to the goal.

In the past some British statesmen have directly or by implication borne witness to the power of satyagraha. In South Africa, Bardoli and Champaran and many other places they had to yield to the demands of satyagrahis. In an interview with Drew Pearson the then Governor of Bombay, Sir George Lloyd (later Lord Lloyd), called Gandhiji's movement of 1919-21 the most colossal experiment in world history which came within an inch of success. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was another tribute to the power of satyagraha. There is hardly any justification, however, for ascribing the

1. *H.*, Jan. 6, 1940, p. 403.

2. *Speeches*, p. 393.

success or the partial success of satyagraha to the mildness or the justice of the British. An important fact to be borne in mind is that no exploiting imperialist power when faced with an effective challenge to its authority deals mildly with the revolutionaries. Possibly the Nazis and the Fascists were capable of greater ruthlessness and brutality than what the British Government displayed in India. But the repression employed by the British Government in India to suppress the satyagraha movements in the past was hardly worthy of a civilized people.

Satyagraha depends for its success not on the mildness of the adversary but on the spontaneous response which voluntary suffering borne in love calls forth from all concerned, friends, foes and neutrals.

For 25 years, critics also say, satyagraha has been tried in India under Gandhiji's leadership and India has yet to gain her freedom. Severe repression of the British suppressed the non-violent resistance of Indians in 1922 as well as in 1933. Thus satyagraha is, according to these critics, a thing of history, a mere relic of a by-gone age, which cannot work successfully in the complex conditions of the modern world.

But twenty years is much too small a period for a country to free itself from the strangle-hold of a mighty well-entrenched Imperial power and to convert that power by self-imposed suffering. The country started with great initial handicaps—appalling poverty, widespread illiteracy, political indifference and above all moral degeneration born of age-long political slavery. Those with vested interests, the princes, landlords and capitalists always aligned themselves with the rulers. There was ample scope for creating dissension among the people and the Government exploited it with consummate skill.

Besides, India was the first country to try non-violent resistance on a nation-wide scale. The Congress accepted non-violence as a matter of expediency rather than of principle. It was the non-violence of helplessness and not of resourceful-

ness, of the weak and not of the brave. Gandhiji believes that he is partly to blame for this, as until recently he did not place unadulterated non-violence, i.e., non-violence of the brave before the country.¹ The satyagrahis harboured ill-will against the adversary and were only outwardly non-violent. During Gandhiji's absence in prison, there was more emphasis on quantity than on quality. Even secret methods which are demoralizing and which Gandhiji always discountenanced were adopted in quest of quick results. This indifferent non-violence could not stand the organized repression of the Government and was unsuccessful in the final heat. Thus the greatest weakness of the satyagraha movement was that it was based not upon the unadulterated non-violence of the brave but on the mere physical observance of the non-violence of the weak. During recent years Gandhiji has been trying to improve the discipline of satyagrahis so as to bring into action the non-violence of the strong.

The non-violence of satyagrahis was no doubt far below the required standard, but in action at least the movement was predominantly non-violent and the satyagrahis exercised great self-restraint. Never before in such large mass movements has there been so little of violence.

Though satyagraha did fail immediately to win independence its achievements are by no means insignificant. It has exerted tremendous influence on the people as well as the Government. "It (satyagraha) has brought about," Gandhiji observes, "an awakening among the masses which would probably have taken generations otherwise. . . ."² It has removed to a large extent the moral and psychological effects of centuries of political subjection and has given to the people a consciousness of their strength to defy physical might and of their capacity for concerted action. The people have regained self-confidence and self-reliance and developed a sense of solidarity. They have come to believe that the redress of their grievances depends on their own moral strength born of sacrifices. Satyagraha has also destroyed

1. *H.*, June 17, 1939, p. 167 2. *H.*, May 18, 1940, p. 132.

their traditional 'political passivity', drawing them into national politics. One indication of the widespread political consciousness is the rapidly increasing response of the people to Gandhiji's call for sacrifice.¹ Besides the increase in numbers, the people showed far greater discipline, bravery, determination and endurance in the second movement (1930-34) than in the first (1920-2). Another tribute to the morale of the people as well as the method of non-violence is the rapid recovery of the Congress after the repression of 1932-34 and 1942-44.

The political awakening brought about by satyagraha has quickened the pace of national life in other spheres also. Thus women have been largely emancipated and bear their due share in the national struggle. Untouchability seems to be on its last legs and caste restrictions have lost some of their rigidity. Cottage industries are being revived and the village is being reconstructed to assume its rightful place as the nerve centre of national life.

As regards the effect of satyagraha on the Government, we have referred above to the tributes paid by the British statesmen to the efficacy of non-violent resistance. This resistance has greatly shaken the most powerful empire in the world. It has shattered the prestige of the Government and has been a severe blow to the morale of the police and other services. In the past the police and the military occasionally grew sick of having to be brutal to the resisters who received but returned no violence. There were cases of open and veiled sympathy and in the North West Frontier Province, some Garhwali soldiers disobeyed the order to open fire on a non-violent crowd and were court-martialled and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The British trade with India

1. According to Dr P. Sitaramayya 30,000 persons courted imprisonment in 1920-22 and 90,000 in 1930-1 (*History of the Congress*). By beginning of 1933, according to Miss Willkinson 4,00,000 persons had gone through the prisons. Miss Willkinson came to India in 1932, with the India League Delegation, to enquire into the political conditions then prevailing. She gave this figure in an article published in *Manchester Guardian* and *Swarajya* in January, 1932. The article is reproduced in *Indian Struggle for Freedom* (Through Western Eyes) edited by Dr B. Kumarappa.

was hit hard by the economic boycott during 1930-34.¹ Satyagraha thus brought tremendous pressure to bear on the Government. Provincial autonomy and the eagerness of the Government to settle the Indian political problems is ascribed to these non-violent movements.

Further non-violence has tried to raise Indian politics to the level of highest idealism and has saved Indian nationalism from exclusiveness and opportunism. Thus the non-violent movements have exalted India's dignity and raised her status in her own eyes as well as in those of the world.²

Some of the anarchists (e.g., Bakunin, Kropotkin and Russian Nihilists), revolutionary syndicalists and Marxists reject non-violence as an adequate technique of resistance and consider violence as the indispensable means of transforming the present social order and ridding it of war, capitalism and exploitation.³ Marx was against anarcho-syndi-

1. India's import of cotton goods decreased from 71.9 crores in 1927-28 to 26.1 crores in 1931-32 and 21.3 crores in 1933-34. Britain's share in the import of piecegoods fell from 78.2% in 1927-28 to 53.5% in 1933-34. (The Indian Year Book from 1927-28 to 1935-36).
2. According to Mrs. Francis Gunther the non-violent revolution of India is the first entirely above-ground revolution in history which has undeviatingly followed the policy of using wholly honourable means to achieve its end and wherein all habitual evils of revolution—hate, terror, spy system, treachery, assassination—are ruled out and the end is held to be mutual renunciation of dominating power and mutual assumption of co-operating goodwill. She also calls it "... a revolution unique in history for its powerful self-control, heroic generosity, civilized dignity and gallantry." (Cabled extracts from her book, *Revolution in India*, published in *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, April 27, 1944).
3. In his Amsterdam speech (Sept. 8, 1872) Marx conceded the possibility that in countries like England workers might be able to attain their end peacefully, though in continental countries force was indispensable for the attainment of the dominion of labour. In 1881, however, he said to Hyndman, "England is the one country in which a peaceful revolution is possible, but," he added after a pause, "history does not tell us so." Force is indispensable because it is the only means to disposses the bourgeoisie, which throttles the progress of society, from the instruments of social production. The State, which is the governmental arm of the nation's industry, is the product and the manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The source of power of the State lies in an armed force which is not identical with or a part of the working population but is separate from it. The liberation of the oppressed class is impossible without the destruction of the machinery of State power. Boris Nicolaivsky and Otto Maenchen-Helfen, *Karl Marx: Man and Fighter* (Tr. by Gwenda David and Eric Mosbacher), pp. 363-64 & 380; Sydney Hook, *Karl Marx*. Ch. VIII, see also his article on Violence in *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*; Lenin, *State and Revolution*, Ch. I.

calist belief in individual acts of terror and "the propaganda of the deed." Individual forms of violence, according to Marxists, invariably facilitate the policy of governmental repression and thus play into the hands of reaction. As against militarist, nationalist and New Darwinian social philosophers who perceive a continuing need for violent struggle, Marx and Lenin regarded violence as a temporary expedient, only justified as a necessary means of ushering in a new order of peace.¹ According to both Marx and Lenin violence can succeed only when the revolutionary situation, i.e., the social condition ripe for a new order, is present. In the words of Lenin, "Revolution is impossible without an all-national crisis, affecting both the exploited and the exploiters."²

But there is an inherent contradiction between the communist goal and the violent means. Attitudes which are inherent in the present social order must be changed if the aim is to bring about the classless and Stateless democracy, the ideal of the communists as well as Gandhiji. Violence used on a grand scale will effectually hinder the emergence of impulses and ideals demanded by the communist society. In the words of Laski, "the condition of communism is the restraint of exactly those appetites which violence releases. . . ."³

Violence, like capitalism, implies treating men as mere means. It degrades and brutalises those who use it and those against whom it is used, arousing in them hatred, fear and anger. Non-violence, on the other hand exalts the satyagrahi as well as the opponent, thus liberating tremendous moral energy for social regeneration.⁴

In believing that an unbridgeable gulf and absolute antagonism between classes is an essential feature of society and that capitalists are incorrigible and past all reform communists seem to proceed on wrong sociology, wrong psy-

1. Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, II, p. 12-16.

2. Quoted in *Karl Marx*, cited above, p. 233. See also Sydney Hook's article on *Violence*, cited above.

3. H. J. Laski, *Communism*, p. 174; see also above, p. 32.

4. Bart De Ligt, cited above, p. 165.

chology and wrong history. Sociologically absolute clash of interests is a marginal rather than a normal situation of social life : classes which seem to be irreconcilable in one social situation co-operate in another.¹ Psychology tells us that every man has limitless capacity for growth and history furnishes us with numerous instances of people who have been cured of their anti-social tendencies and have become useful members of society. Similarly it is wrong to assume that the armed forces of the State are completely separate from the people and are not influenced by popular movements.

Violence is also undemocratic. It denies the major premise of democracy, i.e., the infinite moral worth of the least among men. Besides, violence leads to the growth of the power of experts, centralized absolute government, secret police, inquisition, militarism and denial of liberty and equality. Unlimited power corrupts its operators destroying their habit of democratic responsibility, engendering in them a desire to retain power by even the foulest means and thus rendering them incapable of voluntary abdication. Besides, once a dictatorship is established, the hope of removing it under present conditions of social technique is very remote.² These defects will perpetuate violence and exploitation and will have ultimately to be combated by the communists as believers in non-violence seek to do today. With reference to India Gandhiji has often said that "Warfare may give another rule for the English rule but not self-rule in terms of the masses."³ Thus violence cannot introduce any fundamental change in the unjust relation between the exploiter and the exploited, the rulers and the ruled. This is why, according to Bart. De light, the greater the violence, the weaker the revolution, i.e., the social construction which aims at rooting out all that is inhuman and unworthy of man.⁴

1. K. Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 342; E. Barker, *Reflections on Government*, pp. 116-20.
2. K. Mannheim, *Man and Society*, p. 342; *Communism*, cited above, pp. 174-76; *A Study of War*, I, cited above, p. 192; see also discussion of War in Ch. XI below; Sydney Hook, article on *Violence*, cited above.
3. *Y.I.* II, p. 928.
4. *The Conquest of Violence*, cited above, pp. 75, 162. P. Sorokin discusses in detail in his *Sociology of Revolution* the baneful effects of violent revolutions on social progress.

Besides, in a non-violent revolution there is scope for every individual's contribution, even children can play their part. In the words of Gandhiji, "the weakest can partake in it (non-violence) without becoming weaker. They can only be the stronger for having been in it."¹ This is impossible in a violent revolution.

Unlike non-violence, violence fails to resolve conflicts ; for it suppresses differences instead of integrating them. It ignores even the just claims of the opponent and thus results in injustice and leads to counter-violence. Non-violence, on the other hand, reduces resentment to a minimum in social disputes, because it leads to an effort to discriminate between the evils of a social system and situation and the individuals who are involved in it.² As against violence which destroys the process of a moral and rational adjustment of interest to interest during the course of resistance, non-violence reduces this danger to a minimum and preserves moral, rational and co-operative attitudes within the areas of conflict.² Because violence provokes vindictiveness, while non-violence neutralizes it, there is far greater loss of life and property in a violent revolution than in a non-violent revolution.

Non-violence has checks that automatically work for the vindication of truth and justice on whichever side these may be in a preponderating measures. Victory thus inevitably goes to the party in the right.³

On the other hand, in a violent conflict victory is not determined by the relative justness of the cause of the combatants but by the relative destructive strength of the two.⁴ The war machine which is more thorough in its destructiveness today than ever before is the monopoly of the State which is

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 928.

2. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, pp. 248-51, 254-55.

3. *Y.I.*, I, p. 52.

4. Bart. De Ligt, cited above, p. 81 ; and *A Study of War*, I, cited above p. 192.

controlled by capitalists. Violence, as the World War II shows, is ceasing to be an effective means of resistance even for a State unless its armed forces happen to be, at least, as strong as those of the adversary. Obviously the proletariat has little chance of success in a violent revolution even in an armed country, nothing to speak of a disarmed country like India.¹ Indeed, the proletariat would not be permitted to carry on the organisation preparatory to violent revolution, but would be ruthlessly suppressed in the very beginning. In non-violence there is no such risk.

A violent revolution can be successful only if the Government is disorganised as in Russia at the time of the communist revolution. This is a very rare occurrence. Satyagraha, on the other hand, depends for its success not on external conditions, but on the capacity of resisters to suffer in love and without ill-will. It can succeed even against the mightiest of Governments.

Thus as a method of settling conflicts and regulating individual and group relations non-violence is not only the correct ideal practicable on psychological and historical evidence, it is also the highest expediency.

The World War II is a timely warning that violence is the surest way to another dark age of savagry. The sceptical world perhaps also needs some compelling demonstration of the efficiency of non-violence. Due to the long unbroken tradition of *ahimsa* dating back to her mysterious pre-historic past as well as the leadership of Gandhiji, India seems to be the country that can deliver to mankind the message of corporate non-violence. If India wins her freedom through satyagraha, subject nations, exploited classes and oppressed minorities may adopt the method of non-violence. This may transform the present social, political and economic structure and usher in a new order of peace and liberty.

1. Cf. " . . . the techniques of revolution lag far behind the techniques of Government. Barricades, the symbols of revolution, are relics of an age when they were built up against cavalry." K. Mannheim, *Diagnosis of Our Time*, p. 10.

CHAPTER XI

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NON-VIOLENT STATE¹

The need of visualizing and defining in detail the political, economic and social institutions of the non-violent State has been the subject of a controversy in India. Gandhiji refuses to worry himself about the details of the distant goal. He says with Cardinal Newman :

“ I do not ask to see
The distant scene: one step enough for me.”

His critics on the other hand point out that the leader must see not only one but thousands of steps ahead in order to avoid dangerous pitfalls and serious setbacks. He must plan not only for the present but also for the future.² A clear well-defined goal, it has been said, brings hope to the masses, inspiring them to struggle, and sustaining them in their dreary onward march.

Why this deliberate self-denying ordinance on the part of Gandhiji, this intellectual “ non-possession ” ?

A seeker after truth must have faith in a good deed producing a good result. He must live and act in the present dealing with problems as they arise, concentrating on the immediate duties without any attachment to the fruit thereof. If he gives rein to his imagination and dissipates his energy in an attempt to discern the social order that will emerge after the non-violent revolution, he encumbers himself with

1. By non-violent State we mean the State that is predominantly non-violent. A State depending as it does more or less on coercion is the negation of non-violence. The completely non-violent State would no longer be a State. It would then be the Stateless society and society can be Stateless when it is completely or almost completely non-violent. This is an ideal that may not be fully realized. What we may get in actual practice may be a predominantly non-violent State advancing towards, though perhaps never reaching, the Stateless stage.
- 2 Dr Bhagwan Das: *The Philosophy of Non-co-operation*, p. 70.

irrelevant details and loses his detachment, his thought control and his present efficiency. So with his country under alien bondage Gandhiji has been devoting his entire attention to perfecting the revolutionary technique of non-violence that will transform the present system. Diverting his attention from this objective is, he feels, a formidable distraction that will hamper the creative moral effort necessary for progress towards the goal. This is why according to Gandhiji, "The very nature of the science of satyagraha precludes the student from seeing more than the step immediately in front of him."¹

Besides, satyagraha is a science in the making. Gandhiji has not worked it out in its entirety. He is still experimenting with non-violence, trying to apply it to all spheres of life and studying its possibilities. Indeed, he feels that the experiment is not even in its advanced stage.² No doubt the structure of the non-violent State will be in accordance with the principles of satyagraha. But the details will be determined by the people according to their moral level and their preferences and predilections. Gandhiji, therefore, feels that to try to determine in detail the institutional form of the non-violent State of the future is premature, and unscientific. Thus he once wrote, "I have purposely refrained from dealing with the nature of Government in a society based on non-violence . . . when society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today. But I cannot say in advance what the Government based wholly on non-violence will be like."³

This well-known "one-step-enough-for-me" principle of Gandhiji has also to be understood in the context of his views on the relation between the means and the end.⁴ If our

1. His statement dated Patna, April 7, 1934, *History of the Congress*, p. 955.
2. *H.* May 27, 1939, p. 136 ; Feb. 11, 1939, p. 8 ; and April 13, 1940, p. 90
3. *H.*, Feb. 11, 1939, p. 8.
4. For Gandhiji's views on the Means and the End see chapter IV above.

means are tainted with violence, physical or non-physical, the resulting State will be neither non-violent nor democratic, for the strong will seize power and exploit the weak. The way to non-violent democracy lies through the adoption of non-violence as the creed and not a mere policy. This is why to Gandhiji the problem of the technique of non-violence includes in itself the problem of the institutional form of *Swaraj*. "For me," he has repeatedly said, "*Ahimsa* comes before *Swaraj*."

In the evolution of the non-violent State the determinant is not the visualization of the institutional structure but the soul-force, i.e., the non-violence, of the average individual. A people has a Government that it deserves and the institutional form is but the concrete expression of the moral level of the people. Thus if the people are not genuinely non-violent, exploitation and violence may continue, as they do in most Western countries, even under an apparently democratic constitution. On the other hand, as soon as people acquire self-control, master the method of satyagraha and learn to co-operate voluntarily among themselves and to non-co-operate with the exploiter, the non-violent State will emerge spontaneously as the by-product of the practice of non-violence.¹

Thus Gandhiji's attitude is democratic, scientific and justified on ethical considerations.

But though a detailed delineation of the new order is, according to him, out of question, even non-co-operation with the opponent proceeds on the basis of construction and co-operation among the satyagrahis. In satyagraha the construction of the new and the destruction of the out-moded proceed apace. The progress made by this constructive aspect of non-violent direct action gives us some clue to the new order. Besides, though

1. "It is *Swaraj* when we learn to rule ourselves . . . But such *Swaraj* has to be experienced by each one for himself." *Hind Swaraj*, p. 53.

"Real home-rule is self-rule or self-control." *Hind Swaraj*, p. 95.

against the formulation of any systematic plan of the future social order, Gandhiji has often tried to indicate roughly the broad lines of the kind of society he aims at. *Hind Swaraj* and a large number of stray passages in his speeches, writings, statements and interviews provide us with some material for the study of his views on the new social order.

Gandhiji, as is well-known, is a philosophical anarchist who, ideally speaking, repudiates the State as such, whatever its form. This repudiation has ethical, historical as well as economic basis. The compulsive nature of State authority takes away the moral value of the individual's action ; for an action is moral only when it is voluntary. "No action which is not voluntary can be called moral. . . . So long as we act like machines, there can be no question of morality. If we want to call an action moral, it should have been done consciously, and as a matter of duty."¹ Besides, the State, even though its machinery be most democratic, is rooted in violence. Violence implies exploitation and every State exploits the poor. "The State represents violence in a concentrated and organised form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soul-less machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence."² Once while discussing his theory of trusteeship in relation to private property he remarked, "I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress. We know of so many cases where men have adopted trusteeship, but none where the State has really lived for the poor."²

The ideal society is, according to Gandhiji, the Stateless democracy, the state of enlightened anarchy where social life has become so perfect as to be self-regulated. "In such a state (of enlightened anarchy) everyone is his own ruler.

1. *Ethical Religion*, p. 40. Cf. Bakunin.

2. *An Interview with Mahatma Gandhi* by N. K. Bose in *Modern Review* Oct. 1935. Every anarchist thinker emphasizes the violent character of the State.

He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state, therefore, there is no political power because there is no State.”¹

The ideal democracy will be a federation of satyagrahi village communities. “Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence.”² The federation as well as groups will obviously be organized on a voluntary basis. In such a community almost every individual will have developed a high level of non-violence and acquired almost complete self-control. The individual, continuously aware of Spiritual Reality, will live a life of simplicity and renunciation and live for social service.

It will be a decentralized society with equality pervading every sphere of life. The need for decentralization arises from the fact that centralization means concentration of power in the hands of a few people with the possibility of the abuse of such power. Centralization adds to the complexity of life which is a distraction in all creative moral endeavour. It also discourages initiative, resourcefulness courage and creativeness and diminishes opportunities of self-government and of resisting injustice.

Equality in the social sphere will be expressed through the law of *Varna* combined with the ideals of non-possession and bread-labour. According to Gandhiji the law of *Varna* “established certain spheres of action for certain people with certain tendencies. This avoided all unworthy competition. While recognizing limitations the law of *Varna* admitted of no distinctions of high and low. . . . My conviction is that an ideal social order will only be evolved when the implications of this law are fully understood and given effect to.”³ *Varna* is, according to Gandhiji, intimately, though not indissolubly, connected with birth. He also believes that individuals belonging to every

1. *Y.I.*, July 2, 1931.

2. *H.*, Jan. 13, 1940, p. 411.

3. *An Interview with Mahatma Gandhi*, cited above.

Varna must do bread-labour, i.e., physical labour enough for their daily bread. Whatever people do with their body or mind apart from bread-labour will be labour of love for the common good for which no payment should be demanded.¹ Gandhiji's social ideal thus implies fullest freedom to every individual to devote himself to social service according to his peculiar aptitude.

The ideal of bread-labour automatically leads to non-possession and economic equality which non-violence also implies. "Love and exclusive possession can never go together. Theoretically when there is perfect-love there must be perfect non-possession."² Thus the law of *Varna* and the ideals of bread-labour and non-possession will bring about complete economic and social equality.

The ideals of non-possession and bread-labour also imply an agricultural, rural civilization based on handicrafts. There will be no room in this society for exploitation, the *zamindari* system or capitalism. Everybody would be his own master and none a hired labourer of another. We have discussed in chapter VIII the moral, physical and economic advantages of cottage industries. Gandhiji is not against machinery as such but he is against centralized mass production and profit motive. Centralized production leads to concentration of power, needs control of big markets and vast quantities of raw material and leads to exploitation. A non-violent civilization, therefore, cannot grow up on factory system. It can be built on self-contained villages.³ Gandhiji, however, welcomes "simple tools and instruments and such machinery as saves individual labour and lightens the burden of millions of cottagers. . . ."⁴ Machinery however, "must not be allowed to displace necessary human labour."⁵ Besides, this machinery must be such as the villages can themselves make and can afford to use.⁶

1. See above, pp. 92-93.

2. *An Interview with Mahatma Gandhi*, cited above.

3. *H.*, Nov., 1939, p. 331.

4. *Y.I.*, II, 797.

5. *Y.I.*, II, p. 713.

6. *H.*, Aug. 29, 1936, p. 226.

In this democratic community of self-contained villages true to the ideal of *swadeshi* there will be little international trade and very little of it between one province and another, even between one district and another.

Gandhiji believes that the ideal society is incompatible with heavy transport, courts, lawyers, the modern system of medicine and big cities.¹ In this society there will be no centralized production and, therefore, no heavy transport requiring such production. Besides, most of such transport is due to military considerations and international trade with both of which the non-violent society will have nothing to do. Similarly serious differences among non-violent people will be few and far between and will be adjusted by mutual discussion, persuasion, sometimes by arbitration and rarely, when these methods do not suffice, by suffering self-imposed in love. The idea of bread-labour rules out professional doctors. There will also be no mass production of drugs, medical instruments etc. Most of the diseases that pester human life today will disappear due to the inward control acquired by the individual, the emphasis on manual labour and the utter absence of the senseless rush and worry born of the ever-present scare of competition and insecurity in modern life. Gandhiji holds a high opinion of the efficacy of ancient Indian Yogic exercises for mental, moral and physical health. The minor ailments that may remain will yield to various methods of nature cure. Thus the ideal democracy will be none the worse for the disappearance of doctors who by promising easy cure encourage self-indulgence instead of inculcating self-control among the people.

But how will the non-violent democracy adjust the claims of society and the individual and reconcile individual freedom with social obligation, a task achieved at present by the State by means of coercion exercised in the last resort ?

To Gandhiji society is just like a family, and the relation between the individual and society is one of close interdependence. He rejects alike the unrestricted individualism that

1. *Speeches*, p. 770.

ignores social obligations as well as the other extreme view which regards the individual as a mere cog in the social machine. He writes, "I value individual freedom but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to the present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member."¹ But as between the individual and society the individual comes first in Gandhiji's philosophy, though society is by no means neglected. The individual is above all the soul and in any scheme of social progress the first step always lies with him. The evolution of the Stateless non-violent democracy depends on the average individual evolving genuine non-violence and acquiring personal *swaraj*. Society must provide opportunities for the maximum growth of the individual which consists in selfless service of society and willing fulfilment of his social obligations. In case either of the two goes wrong the other should resist non-violently. But apart from the pressure of the drastic step of non-violent direct action and the inward morality of the individual both of which induce him to fulfil his social obligations there is another non-violent factor which keeps the individual alive to these obligations. This is what Hindu thinkers call *dharma*.

Dharma which corresponds to the German conception of *sittlichkeit*² is a system of culture and discipline rather than a creed. Sir S. Radhakrishnan defines *dharma* as the complex of influences which shape the moral feeling and the character of the people and as a code of conduct supported by the general conscience of the people.³ It is neither subjective in the sense of morality imposed by the individual's

1. *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 144.

2. Earnest Barker translates it as 'Social Ethics' in *Political Thought in England from Spencer to Today*, p. 27.

3. Sir S. Radhakrishnan, *The Heart of Hindustan*, p. 17.

conscience, nor external like the law enforced by the State. *Dharma* is not a fixed code of mechanical rules, but a living spirit which grows and moves in response to the development of society.¹ The function of *dharma* is to hold together harmoniously the social order and to act as a guide to the individual's conscience so as to train him to realize his potentialities.

Dharma or social ethics of the non-violent society, which will exert strong moral pressure on the individual and thus reinforce his conscience, will be a very important factor in sustaining social cohesion. The children born and educated in the ideal non-violent atmosphere will imbibe the new morality in the natural course.

Even today the fulfilment of the individual's social obligation is due not so much to law and coercion as to other factors, specially the force of habit, the inward urge of the individual's moral sense and the pressure of social ethics. Far more than today in the village communities of ancient India social and economic life was regulated by *dharma* of which the law of *Varnashrama* was an important part. In ancient India the function of the State was not to alter or amend *dharma* but to subserve it. The disciplinary function which the State performs today by means of law and coercion mostly belonged, in ancient India, to voluntary associations employing non-coercive methods, i.e., moral pressure. It was not a case of an utter lack of social restraint but moral pressure rather than coercion was the means of this restraint. This pressure in the last resort took the form of the refusal of society to have social or economic dealings with the reprobated individual. Very likely this pressure often deteriorated into non-physical violence, but at least it could be non-violent, and in a free society Gandhiji would prefer it to the organized violence of the State.²

The village communities of ancient India, life in which was to a large extent spontaneously self-regulated, made a

1. *Ibid*, p. 18.

2. Thus Gandhiji writes, "Social boycott such as stopping barbers, washer-men, etc., is undoubtedly a punishment which may be good in a free society." *Y.I.*, I, p. 941.

near approach to Gandhiji's ideal of enlightened anarchy. Thus he writes, "The nearest approach to civilization based upon non-violence is the erstwhile village republic of India. I admit that it was very crude. I know that there was in it no non-violence of my definition and conception. But the germ was there."¹ In his well-known address to the Missionary Conference, Madras (1916), Gandhiji said, "Following out the *Swadeshi* spirit I observe the indigenous institutions and the village *panchayats* hold me. India is really a republican country, and it is because it is that, that it has survived every shock hitherto delivered. Princes and potentates, whether they were Indian born or foreigners, have hardly touched the vast masses except for collecting revenue. The latter in their turn seem to have rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's and for the rest have done much as they have liked. The vast organisation of the caste answered not only the religious wants of the community, but it answered to its political needs. The villages managed their internal affairs through the caste system, and through it they dealt with any oppression from the ruling power or powers."²

Thus in the non-violent society non-violence will reconcile individual freedom with social restraint. Non-violence implies that mechanisms of control which maintain social cohesion will consist of internal and non-coercive external sanctions.³ The individual will use his opportunity to advance "the greatest good of all," while society will give to the

1. *H. Jan.* 13, 1940, p. 411.

2. *Speeches*, p. 276.

3. Instances of internal sanctions are fear of being shamed, sense of guilt, force of habit etc., while pressure of public opinion, fear of reciprocal action, dread of divine power are some of the external sanctions. Various agencies of education are the chief means of the internalization of the standards of a society. On the basis of anthropological evidence Mead believes that "As much specific education is necessary to train a child to respond to external as to internal sanctions." In Ch. I (p. 19) we have referred to the Jewish community which was held together by non-coercive sanctions. In some of the primitive tribes today there is nothing corresponding to the State. Thus the Eskimos and the Ojibwa lack political forms necessary for group action. Similarly the Arapesh and the Bachiga lack effective administrative mechanism and are not political societies. Among the Zuni and the Samoa also strong central authority with effective sanctions is lacking. None of these tribes values property highly, all of them considering it of slight importance. See Margaret Mead (Ed.),

individual maximum opportunity. Either can resist injustice on the part of the other non-violently.

But the Stateless non-violent society in which there will be no police and military, no law courts, doctors, heavy transport and centralized production is an inspiring ideal rather than the goal to be soon realized.¹ Society can become Stateless only when men have acquired complete personal *swaraj* and grown accustomed spontaneously to observe their social obligations without the operation of the State. Because people cannot yet rise to the level of this exacting idealism, in his corporate activity Gandhiji does not aim, at the present, at destroying hospitals and courts, railways and mills, though he considers them a necessary evil, would welcome their natural destruction and is, in his personal capacity, working for the realization of the ideal society in which these would have no place.²

Indeed, Gandhiji believes that the ideal society will always remain an ideal unrealized and unrealizable in its entirety. This is his attitude towards all ideals.³ Thus in 1940 in a

Co-operation and Competition among Primitive Tribes, specially the last chapter.

Prof. Ross observes that political types of control which operate through fear or prejudice will be preferred in a society in proportion as the population elements to be held together are anti-pathetic and jarring ; the subordination of the individual will and welfare is required by the scheme of control ; the social constitution stereotypes differences of status ; the differences in economic conditions and opportunity it consecrates are great and cumulative ; and the parasitic relation is maintained between races, classes or sexes. On the other hand ethical instruments of control, such as public opinion, suggestion, personal ideal, social religion, art and social valuation, will be preferred in proportion as the population is homogeneous ; its culture is uniform and diffused ; the social contacts between the elements in the population are many and amicable ; the total burden of requirement laid upon the individual is light ; and the social constitution does not consecrate distinctions of status or the parasitic relation, but conforms to common elementary notions of Justice. E. A. Ross, *Social Control*, pp. 411-13.

1. Amongst anarchist thinkers, Godwin, Thomas Hodgskin and Proudhon did not look forward to the establishment of a society from which the State would be completely eliminated. On the other hand Bakunin, Josiah Warren, Benjamin Tucker and Kropotkin, besides many other anarchist thinkers, held that it was possible to evolve a Stateless society. Marx and Lenin also believed that the proletarian State would wither away and people would grow accustomed to observe conditions of social existence without force and without subjection.
2. *Hind Swaraj*, pp. VII & VIII ; *Y.I.*, I, pp. 885-6 ; and *Y.I.*, II pp. 1129-30.
3. See chapter V, pp. 101-103.

conversation at Santiniketan, in answer to the question, can a State carry on strictly according to the principle of non-violence? Gandhiji replied, "A Government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-violent, because it represents all the people. I do not today conceive of such a golden age. But I do believe in the possibility of a predominantly non-violent society. And I am working for it."¹

The ideal non-violent society of Gandhiji, unattainable due to human imperfection, indicates the direction rather than the destination, the process rather than the consummation. The structure of the State that will emerge as a result of the non-violent revolution will be a compromise, a *via media*, between the ideal non-violent society and the facts of human nature. It will be the attainable "middle way"² of Gandhiji, the first step, after the revolution, towards the ideal.

This *via media* will correspond to the quality of non-violence evolved by the average individual. Non-violence and democracy are both rooted in the spiritual equality of all men. If political power is won through the non-violence of the weak the State established will be at best a political democracy or democracy as the machinery of government. The external form, the constitution, will be democratic but exploitation will continue, for the non-violence of the weak permits the use of violence. On the other hand if the non-violence evolved in the revolution is that of the brave, the resulting State will be a genuine democracy, in which exploitation and coercion will be minimised. Thus in answer to a letter from Lord Lothian, Gandhiji wrote, "... constitutional or democratic Government is a distant dream so long as non-violence is not recognised as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere policy."³

In India's war of liberation Gandhiji has been trying to put into action the non-violence of the brave. If the country

1. *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

2. Gandhiji once said, "Having ascertained the law of our being, we must set about reducing it to practice to the extent of our capacity and no further. That is the middle way." *V.I.*, II. P. 659.

3. *H.* Feb. 11, 1939, p. 8.

sticks to satyagraha, the State and society will become predominantly non-violent, i.e., democratic.

The State will no doubt continue to exist, for there will be some individuals or groups with anti-social tendencies and the absence of external restraint will lead to anarchy.

The satyagrahi State will be equal in status to other States and free to manage its own affairs. Progress is impossible without the right to err, i.e., freedom to try experiments, and Gandhiji defines *Swaraja* as "freedom to err and the duty of correcting errors."¹ Freedom is a part of truth and unless a nation is free it cannot worship truth.² So every nation, nothing to speak of a satyagrahi nation, should be free to rule itself.³ Freedom of a country is essential not only for its own progress but also for that of others. Control of one country over another is destructive of democracy in the imperialist country and leads to international complications and wars. Gandhiji, as we have pointed out later in this chapter, does not stand for isolated independence, nor is his nationalism exclusive nor designed to harm any nation or individual.

Freedom and equality will not only characterize the international status of the satyagrahi State but also determine its internal life. The State will be democratic, for masses participating in the non-violent revolution will control political power. Says Gandhiji "*Swaraj* for me means freedom for the meanest of our countrymen."⁴ India's *Swaraj* signifies to him the vesting of the ultimate authority in the peasant and the labourer and not the mere transference of power from the white bureaucrat to the brown bureaucrat.⁵ Democracy implies decentralization, for decentralization is a safeguard against exploitation and misuse of authority.

1. *Speeches*, p. 388.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 2.

3. *Y.I.*, Oct. 15, 1931.

4. *Y.I.*, II, p. 602.

5. *Speeches*, pp. 378 and 380.

To Gandhiji political power, i.e., the State, is not an end in itself but "one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life."¹ Thus he does not accept the Hegelian view of the State as the final goal of human organization, its own end and object, the ultimate end which has the highest right against the individual and is itself above morality, or the Mussolinian dictum, "Outside the State there is nothing." Gandhiji does not consider the State even the group of groups or the community of communities as the Idealist thinkers like Green and Bosanquet do. To him the State is only "one of the means" to secure the greatest good of all. There is nothing sacrosanct about the State. It is a concession to human weakness and the more the man can do without it, the more real is his freedom. He distrusts the State and seeks to develop in the people, through satyagraha, the capacity to resist the State authority when it is abused. Thus ". . . . real *Swaraj* will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when abused."² Again, "Real home rule is possible only where passive resistance (satyagraha) is the guiding force of the people. Any other rule is foreign rule."³

Like Pluralists and Anarchists, Gandhiji is against the theory of absolute sovereignty of the State which lays upon the individual the duty of absolute, unquestioning obedience to the law of the State. He believes in the "Sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority."⁴ A man, according to him, owes only a limited and relative loyalty to the State as to other associations. This loyalty is conditional on the decision of the State or any other association appealing to the individual's conscience. This is no doubt a perpetual threat of anarchy. But this is the only adequate safeguard against the abuse of political power. Though Gandhiji makes the disobedience of laws, which offend the moral sense, a right as well as a duty of the citizen

1. *Y.I.*, July 2, 31.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 491.

3. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 74.

4. *H.*, Jan. 2, 1937, p. 374.

and considers such disobedience the key to democracy,¹ he provides ample safeguard against anarchy by making this disobedience civil and non-violent.

As regards the political constitution of the non-violent State, it may be pointed out that since 1908 Gandhiji has subjected the Parliamentary Government as prevailing in England to severe criticism. In 1917 in his presidential address to the first Gujarat Political Conference he demanded Parliamentary Government. In 1920 he said, "My *Swaraj* is the Parliamentary Government of India in the modern sense of the term for the time being. . . ."² In 1942 he told Louis Fischer that he did not believe in the accepted Western form of democracy with its universal voting for parliamentary representatives.³ This seems to be confusing but it should be borne in mind that he attaches far more importance to the spirit behind a constitution than to its external form. His criticism of parliamentary democracy is due more to the spirit in which it is actually worked than to the constitutional machinery. Gandhiji does not believe that representative institutions are something new or unsuitable to India, though he is against a wholesale copying of the West.⁴

Democracy to be genuine must provide equal opportunity to the weakest and the strongest. This cannot happen except through non-violence.⁵ This is why Gandhiji defines democracy as "the rule of unadulterated non-violence."⁶ Non-violence or democracy also involves self-purification or the moral regeneration of the individual. In Gandhiji's words, ". . . political self-Government that is, self-Government for a large number of men and women, is no better than individual self-Government. . . ."⁷

States in the West are only nominal democracies because they ignore these vital requirements. Hence the mad race

1. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 71.

2. *Y.I.*, I, p. 873; also see *Y.I.*, I, p. 885 and the Introduction to *Hind Swaraj*, p. VIII.

3. Louis Fischer, *A Week With Gandhi*, p. 55.

4. *Y.I.*, III, p. 285.

5. *H.*, June 18, 1940, p. 129.

6. *H.*, Octo. 13, 1940, p. 320.

7. Mahadeo Desai, *With Gandhiji in Ceylon*, p. 93.

for armaments, imperialism, exploitation, capitalism, political instability, political corruption and poverty of leadership. According to Gandhiji capitalism has, by making State-intervention necessary in economic affairs, contributed to the emergence of the all-powerful State which makes individual freedom impossible and is the greatest danger the world faces. The real problem today is to devise checks and balances on such a State and to prevent its rise.¹

In *Hind Swaraj* Gandhiji severely criticises the Mother of Parliaments comparing it to a "sterile woman." It has not yet of its own accord done a single good thing. If Parliament consists of the best men elected by enlightened voters, it "should not need the spur of petitions or any other pressure. Its work should be so smooth that its effect should be more apparent day by day. But, as a matter of fact, it is generally acknowledged that the members are hypocritical and selfish. Each thinks of his own little interest. It is fear that is the guiding motive".² Besides, Parliament is mercurial and unsteady in its fidelity to ministers. "Today it is under Mr Asquith, tomorrow it may be under Mr Balfour."³ Another instance of Parliament's fickleness is that there is no certainty about its decisions. "What is done today may be undone tomorrow. It is not possible to recall a single instance in which finality can be predicted for its work."⁴

The members of Parliament are seen to stretch themselves and dose when the greatest questions are debated. "Sometimes they talk away until listeners are disgusted. Carlyle called it the 'talking shop of the world.' Members vote for their party without a thought."⁵

The Prime Minister falls far short of Gandhiji's ideal of leadership. "The Prime Minister is more concerned about

1. Louis Fischer, *A Week With Gandhi*, pp. 82-3.

2. *Hind Swaraj*, pp. 15-16.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 16. Gandhiji's opinion seems to be that if sincere efforts were made to ascertain truth and stick to it and if the leaders had acquired personal *swaraj*, there should not be frequent swings of pendulum in public life.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 16.

his power than about the welfare of Parliament. His energy is concentrated upon securing the success of his party. His care is not always that the Parliament shall do right. Prime Ministers are known to have made the Parliament do things merely for party advantage.”¹ They cannot be really considered to be patriotic, and though they do not take bribery, they are open to subtler influence. “In order to gain their ends, they certainly bribe people with honours . . . they have neither real honesty nor a living conscience.”¹

The voters take their cue from their newspapers, which are often dishonest.¹ The voters are as changeable and fickle as their Parliament. Their views “swing like the pendulum of a clock and are never steadfast.”¹ The people would follow a powerful orator or a man who gives them parties, receptions, etc. Due to these defects democracies in the West are undemocratic. Masses, instead of ruling themselves, are exploited by the ruling classes. Parliaments are the emblems of slavery and costly toys of nations—costly because they are a waste of time and money.

In recent years Parliamentary Government has been subjected to severe criticism. Thus the system of elections ; the slow-moving procedure ; the incapacity of the system, due to centralization and congestion of business, for the really creative work of social and economic planning ; the dictatorship of the cabinet ; the increasing power of permanent officials ; the failure of the system to induce the citizen to participate actively in political life ; the absence of approximate economic equality—all these weak points have been assailed by many critics. To Gandhiji democracy remains unachieved more on account of the prevailing belief in the efficacy of violence and untruth than on account of mere institutional inadequacy. Democracy is really vitiated by the wrong ideas and ideals that move men.

If *Swaraj* is won through non-violence, the democratic State that emerges will be inspired by the ideals of truth and non-violence. Corruption and hypocrisy that characterise

1. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Western democracies will have been minimised before the non-violent revolution succeeds. The emphasis will be not on mere numbers but on the spirit of equality expressing itself in service and sacrifice. In a statement issued in 1934 Gandhiji remarked, "Western democracy is on its trial. If it has already proved a failure, may it be reserved to India to evolve the true science of democracy by giving a visible demonstration of its buttress. Corruption and hypocrisy ought not to be the inevitable products of democracy, as they undoubtedly are today. Nor is bulk the true test of democracy. True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent. I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible method. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within."¹

Gandhiji is not against elections and representation. In 1925 he wrote, "By *Swaraj* I mean the Government of India by the consent of the people as ascertained by the largest number of adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled, who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters."² Again, "If independence is born non-violently all the component parts will be voluntarily interdependent working in perfect harmony under representative central authority which will derive its sanction from the confidence reposed in it by the component parts." The central power, he goes on to add, will be based on "universal suffrage exercised by a disciplined and politically intelligent electorate."³

If he could have his way he would like the democratic State to be administered by a few representatives selected by the people and removable at the will of the people. A reduction in number of representatives would be feasible in a predominantly non-violent State due to the extreme decen-

1. *History of the Congress*, pp. 981-2.

2. *Y.I.*, II, pp. 488-9.

3. *H.*, Oct. 13, 1940, p. 320.

tralization of political and economic authority, the limited functions of the State and the correspondingly increased importance of voluntary associations.

At the Round Table Conference Gandhiji suggested indirect election through the village *panchayats*. In 1942 he again advocated the system of indirect election. According to him seven hundred thousand villages of India would be organized according to the will of its citizens, all of them voting. These villages, each having one vote, would elect their district administrations. The district administrations would elect provincial administrations which in turn would elect a president who would be the national chief executive. This will decentralize power among seven hundred thousand units. There will then be among these villages voluntary co-operation which will produce real freedom.¹ This indirect election should not be branded as undemocratic. It will diminish excitement, bribery, corruption and violence in elections and has to be understood in the context of decentralization and reduced functions of the State. At the Round Table Conference Gandhiji was also opposed to second chambers and to special representation of interests as these are undemocratic.

Those seeking election must have acquired personal *swaraj*, i.e., must be selfless, able and incorruptible. They should be free from the morbid craze for office, self-advertisement, running down of opponents, and psychological exploitation of voters which are so much in evidence in elections today. The vote should come not as a result of canvassing but by virtue of service rendered by the candidate. All public offices must be held in the spirit of service without the slightest expectation of personal gain. "If A is satisfied in ordinary life with getting rupees twenty-five per month he has no right

1. Louis Fisher, *A Week With Gandhi*, pp. 55 and 80.

The *panchayat* which will conduct the government of the village will consist of five persons annually elected by adult villagers, male and female. The *panchayat* will be the legislature, executive and judiciary combined. This village democracy will be based on individual freedom and will be able to defy the might of a world because both the individual and the village will be ruled by the law of non-violence. *H.*, July 26, 1942, p. 238.

to expect rupees two hundred and fifty on becoming a minister or obtaining any other office under the Government."¹ In the case of a satyagrahi who wills the common weal and not his own and tries to advance it, the willingness to accept office implies love and service of mankind. In his case, to use the words of Prof. Hocking, "power over men becomes completely merged with power for men."²

As for voters, according to Gandhiji, "The qualifications for franchise should be neither property nor position but manual work . . . literary or property test has proved to be elusive. Manual work gives an opportunity to all who wish to take part in the Government and the well-being of the State."³ Labour franchise is the application to politics of the ideal of bread-labour which aims at making life self-sufficient and people self-reliant and fearless. The intelligent and conscious adoption of the ideal of bread-labour will prevent voters from becoming mere pawns in the hands of politicians.⁴ It will develop in the people the capacity to resist misuse of authority and prevent the division of the State into a small class of exploiting, self-seeking rulers and a large class of exploited subjects rendering passive, unthinking obedience.

The State established by the non-violent revolution will be what has been called 'a spiritualized democracy.' In such a democracy the method of taking decision by majority

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1. *H*, Sept. 3, 38, p. 292. Ideally speaking every individual should earn his living by engaging in bread labour and should perform public duties in the spirit of service without any pay. This may be possible only in the distant future. Even under present conditions Gandhiji is against public servants getting salaries out of all proportion to the national income. Under *Swaraaj* Government, Gandhiji advocates, there should be drastic cuts in salaries. According to the resolution of the Karachi Congress on Fundamental Rights rupees five-hundred will be the maximum salary payable to the highest State functionaries. The *London Times* once defined adequate salaries by saying that the salary should be enough not to deter any person of public spirit from taking up an office and on the other hand it should not attract people into public life for the sake of the salary. (See *Harijan*, August 7, 1937).
 2. W. E. Hocking, *Man And the State*, p. 316.
 3. *P.I.*, II, pp. 435-6.
 4. *H*, Jan. 2, 1937, p. 373.

opinion will be ordinarily, though not always, applicable. In matters concerning a particular religious or cultural group within the State the decision will rest with the group itself. In vital questions the dissent of the minority will get the fullest consideration and will not be disregarded by the majority. Says Gandhiji "In matters of conscience the law of majority has no place."¹ "The rule of majority has a narrow application, i.e., one should yield to the majority in matters of detail. But it is slavery to be amenable to the majority no matter what its decisions are. Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep."² Again, "The rule of majority does not mean it should suppress the opinion of even an individual if it is sound. An individual's opinion should have greater weight than the opinion of many, if that opinion is sound. That is my view of real democracy."³

Subjection of the dissentient minority to the will of the majority in questions involving important principles is not only the negation of non-violence but will also be resisted by the satyagrahi minority. In such cases the only way for the majority as well as the minority will be to try to convert the other through persuasion or self-suffering.

Thus in the non-violent democracy there would be no place for the tyranny of the majority. The meticulous regard that Gandhiji advocates for the minority is not the tyranny of the minority but "the magnanimity of the majority."⁴ On the other hand it is the duty of the minority to yield to the majority decision except when the decision offends their moral sense ; for otherwise there can be no social life and no corporate self-government.

The non-violent democracy is the highest form of State that man has yet been able to envisage. No doubt such a State will make great demands on the individual, for it pre-

1. *Y.I.*, I. p. 860.

2. *Y.I.*, I, pp. 864-5.

3. Gandhiji's Statement on the break-down of Gandhi-Jinnah talks. September 28, 1944.

4. *H.*, July 1, 1939, p. 185.

sumes man living not as he does but as he should, not for pleasures of the senses but for social service. The non-violent State can subsist only on the basis of a strong sense of unity of ideals. But non-violent direct action that will usher in the non-violent State will also create that moral atmosphere in which alone this State can flourish.

The State is a mere means and not an end. The ultimate end or the purpose of the non-violent State will be to advance "the greatest good of all." To that end it will give to the individual maximum opportunity for growth. But the State is rooted in violence, exploits the poor and by enforcing action restricts the scope for self-rule on the part of the individual. So in a predominantly non-violent society the State will govern the least and use the least amount of force.¹ Consistently with the moral level of the people it will aim at reducing its functions so as to efface itself ultimately and thus lead to the self-regulated, ordered anarchy.

As regards the State governing the least Gandhiji writes, "Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of Government control, whether it is foreign or whether it is national. *Swaraj* Government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life."² Again, "I admit that there are certain things which cannot be done without political power, but there are numerous other things which do not at all depend upon political power. That is why a thinker like Thoreau said that 'that Government is best which governs the least.' This means that when people come into possession of political power, the interference with the freedom of the people is reduced to a minimum. In other words, a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much State interference is truly democratic. Where such condition is absent the form of Government is democratic in name."³

If freedom is won through non-violent direct action "least government" will be practicable, for that freedom will be

1. *Y.I.*, III, p. 560.

2. *Y.I.*, II, p. 290.

3. *H.*, Jan. 11, 1936, p. 380.

an organic inward growth. During the course of the revolution people will acquire capacity for voluntary co-operation and for concerted action and will learn to regulate most of their social life through voluntary organisations. The bewildering multiplicity of functions which the modern State performs will also become unnecessary in the non-violent State due to the simplicity of life, decentralization and the absence of violent class conflicts and militarism. Besides, the justification and the extent of State activity depends on whether people attach greater value to security against the invasive acts of others, i.e., to peace and order imposed by law, than to freedom of action. In the non-violent State such invasive acts will be infrequent and people will have acquired the technique of dealing with them non-violently. This will also narrow the province of State action.

The functions of the State will be gradually reduced and transferred to voluntary associations. Gandhiji is, however, not a doctrinaire. He would decide every case on its own merits and where State action is likely to advance the welfare of the people he would welcome it in spite of his distrust of the State. In performing its functions the object of the State will be to serve the masses. The interest of the classes, so long as these continue, will be its concern to the extent that this interest subserves and does not conflict with the interest of the masses. Gandhiji insists that every interest that is hostile to that of the masses must be revised or must subside if it is incapable of revision.¹

The State will perform its functions with the minimum use of coercion. Towards the close of this chapter we have dealt with the non-violent way in which this State will meet foreign aggression. Internally the need of coercion arises in relation to crimes and other violent out-breaks both of which threaten the existence of society.

As stated earlier, according to Gandhiji all crime is a disease caused more by social than by individual failings.²

1. *Y.J.*, Sept. 17, 1931.

2. See above, pp. 144-45.

The non-violence of the brave will bring about the rationalization of social, political and economic institutions, which will be based on justice, real equality and genuine brotherhood.¹ The Government will rule "through its moral authority based upon the greatest good will of the people."² The pressure of social ethics will induce far more spontaneous conformity to the demands of social obligations than it does today. The satyagrahi citizen will treat the criminal non-violently.³ So in the non-violent State crime as well as coercion will diminish.

Crime will, however, not disappear, for the non-violent State will not consist of ideal men. There will remain some anti-social, parasitic individuals who might, due to lack of self-control, resort to violence and disobey laws. Thus referring to criminal distillation Gandhiji once wrote, "Some of it will go on perhaps till doomsday as thieving will."⁴ When the new State enters upon its career there may be some violent organisations seeking to subvert the non-violent Government. According to Gandhiji "No Government can allow private military organizations to function without endangering public peace."⁵ Nor will the satyagrahi State tolerate crimes and allow civil liberty to degenerate into criminal liberty, i.e., licence. Thus it will not ignore incitement to violence.⁶ Crimes cannot be ignored for they promote an atmosphere of violence and are destructive of ordered society and "No Government worth its name can suffer anarchy to prevail."⁷

1. *H.*, April 27, 1940, p. 108.

2. *H.*, July 13, 40, p. 197.

3. See above, pp. 145-50.

4. *H.*, July 31, 1937, p. 86.

5. *H.*, April 13, 1940, p. 86.

"The free Indian State shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom, provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a constituent assembly." *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 96. Gandhiji's article entitled *Jai Prakash's Picture* giving in outline Mr Jai Prakash Narain's views about the structure of the Indian State after the success of the non-violent revolution. Gandhiji concurred with the socialist leader's views.

6. *H.*, Oct. 23, 1937, p. 308.

7. *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.

Personally Gandhiji does not believe in "imprisoning by way of punishment even those who commit violence."¹ Indeed he does not believe in the system of punishment for crimes, whether private or public.² If he had his way he would fling open doors of prisons and discharge even murderers.³ But that is an unrealizable ideal under present conditions of society. Thus he wrote in 1937 "I have personally not found a way out of punishment and punitive restrictions in all conceivable cases." But though he would retain punishment, "punishments have to be non-violent if such an expression is permissible in that connection."⁴

In dealing with crime the satyagrahi State will make the minimum use of coercion. The object of the State will be neither retribution nor deterrence both of which, as large scale recidivism bears out, tend to deaden the criminal's sociability and injure society as well as the criminal. Punishment in the satyagrahi State will aim at the reform of the criminal. The non-violent punishment will put an end to intimidation and humiliation, and occasional torture and terror to which the criminal is at present subjected. Obviously there will be no place for capital punishment as death sentence is contrary to *ahimsa*. "Under a State governed according to principles of *ahimsa*, therefore, a murderer would be sent to a penitentiary and there given a chance of reforming himself."⁵ Between capital punishment and other punishments there is, to Gandhiji, a difference not merely of quantity but also of quality. Other punishments can be recalled and reparations can be made to the person wrongly punished. "But once a man is killed, the punishment is beyond recall or reparation."⁶

Gandhiji would in all likelihood employ all the non-violent means by which the criminal may be educated in better ways,

1. His statement on the morning of the Gandhi-Irwin Truce in 1931. *History of the Congress*, p. 753.

2. *H.*, Sept. 4, 1937, p. 233.

3. D. G. Tendulkar and others, *Gandhiji, His Life and Work*, p. 381.

4. *H.*, Oct. 23, 1937, p. 308.

5. *H.*, April 27, 1940, p. 101.

6. *Y.I.*, II, p. 862.

e.g., examination and treatment of the prisoner by expert psychologists, proper education including education in some productive craft, the system of probation and parole, adequate opportunities for self-government and for setting right grievances, etc. He would, however, retain jails and imprisonment.¹

In 1937 when the Congress assumed office in the provinces Gandhiji suggested that jails should be turned into reformatories and workshops and should be self-supporting and educational instead of being spending and punitive departments. For the reform of jails Gandhiji had prepared a plan in 1922 when he was a prisoner. The plan was that "all industries that were not paying should be stopped. All the jails should be turned into hand-spinning and hand-weaving institutions. They should include (wherever possible) cotton growing to producing the finest cloth. . . . Prisoners must be treated as defectives, not criminals to be looked down upon. Warders should cease to be the terrors of the prisoners, but the jail officials should be their friends and instructors. The one indispensable condition is that the state should buy all the *khadi* that may be turned out by the prisons at cost price. And if there is a surplus, the public may get it at a trifling higher price to cover the expense of running a sales depot."² Gandhiji believes that if his suggestion is adopted jails will be linked to the villages, they will spread to them the message of *khadi*, and discharged prisoners may become model citizens of the State.³

To *khadi* Gandhiji would not mind adding other industries. What he is concerned with is not so much the practical details as the principle that prisons should be regarded not as an agency created by society for vengeance on criminality, a symptom of the pathological state of society itself, but as a reformatory, a hospital and a school combined into one, maintained for the purpose of converting the defectives to the non-violent way of life.⁴

1. *Y.J.*, I, pp. 1118 and 1122.

2. *H.*, July 17, 1937, p. 180.

3. *H.*, July 31, 1937, p. 198.

4. Mahadeo Desai's article *No Compromise*. *H.*, Jan. 8, 1938, p. 411.

All the same Gandhiji recognizes that imprisonment is a punishment and as such coercive and "a fall from the pure doctrine."¹ A non-violent prison or imprisonment is as much of a contradiction as a non-violent State. The prison will however, correspond to the State and society and aim at minimizing coercion.

In the non-violent State civil disturbances will also be minimized. There will not be many occasions for violent conflicts between groups. Besides, masses will have acquired the capacity to deal non-violently with violent outbreaks. Gandhiji writes, "So long as we are not saturated with pure *ahimsa* we cannot possibly win *Swaraj* through non-violence. We can come into power only when we are in majority or, in other words, when the large majority of people are willing to abide by the law of *ahimsa*. When this happy state prevails the spirit of violence will have all but vanished and internal disorder will have come under control."² Thus in the non-violent State there will be little likelihood of communal disturbances and serious labour troubles.²

Gandhiji concedes that even in the non-violent State a police force will be necessary.³ But he would transform the police system curing it of its present violent ways. He would demand of the police-man of the satyagrahi State the qualifications that he has prescribed for the volunteers of Peace Brigades. Thus he writes, "The police of my conception will, however, be of a wholly different pattern from the present day force. Its rank will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help, and through mutual co-operation they will easily deal with the ever-decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some kind of arms but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact the policemen will be reformers. Their police

1. *Y.I.*, II, p. 862.

2. *H.*, Sept. 1, 1940, p. 265.

3. *Y.I.*, I, pp. 284, 641 and 1086 ; *H.*, Feb. 10, 1940, p. 441, and March 9, 1940, p. 31.

work will be confined to robbers and dacoits.”¹

He would permit the police to bear arms, for one of their functions would be to arrest defectives, who commit crimes, for non-violent treatment in prisons. The police would also use physical force to restrain, for example, a lunatic run amuck bent upon murder. Gandhiji would likewise concede such modern methods of preventing crimes as tear gas.² He admits that the use of tear gas is not justified in terms of the non-violent ideal. But he would defend its use if he found that he could not save a helpless girl from violation or prevent an infuriated crowd from indulging in madness except by its use.³

The Congress Governments in some of the provinces of India were taken to task by Gandhiji, for they failed to devise peaceful ways and means of preserving order and had to fall back upon the police and the military to suppress communal riots and labour trouble. He wrote, “To the extent that the Congress ministries have been obliged to make use of the police and the military to that extent in my opinion we must admit our failure.”³ He is opposed not to the police as such, but to its present day form and its out and out violent methods. Inability to do without the present police system is, to him, an indication of incapacity to hold power through non-violent means. As for the military until recently he was willing to retain it.⁴ In recent years he has

1. *H.*, Sept. 1, 1940, p. 265. According to K. G. Mashruwala, “The true function of the police ought to be the *prevention* of crime. At present it practically consists in watching for criminals, and detecting and arresting them after a crime has been committed.” See his *Practical Non-violence*, p. 21.
2. *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.
3. *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 197.
4. *Y.I.*, I, pp. 641 and 1086.
Y.I., II, p. 924.

In the well-known interview that he granted to journalists the day after the Gandhi-Irwin Truce, in answer to the question, if he envisaged the possibility of doing away with a national army when *Purna Swaraj* was obtained, he remarked “As a visionary, yes. But I do not think it is possible for me to see it during my life time. It may take ages before the Indian nation may accommodate itself to having no army at all. It is possible my want of faith may account for this pessimism on my part. But I do not exclude such a possibility.” He went on

disapproved of the use of military for maintaining civil liberties and internal peace.¹ He has also definitely declared against the military as the means of defence against foreign aggression.

The police and the military are considered to be the limbs of law in the modern democracy. The satyagrahi State stands for the amputation of these limbs, particularly the *military*. The police, though retained, will be transformed. Even though Gandhiji concedes coercion, it is well to remember that he retains it in the background to be used when non-violent methods cannot be employed, that he prefers the lesser violence of reformatory punishment to the greater violence of crime and lawlessness and that this coercion is not the inadequacy of non-violence but an evidence of human imperfection. A fully non-violent man would be incapable of using violence and would have no use for it. His non-violence would suffice under all conditions.² While conceding minimum coercion, as an idealist he insists "that the use of force is wrong in whatever degree and under whatever circumstances."³ He refuses to drag the ideal to the level of the actual, for this course he believes is the only way to the highest attainment.

The State will also perform the judicial function, though according to Gandhiji as much of judicial work as possible should be transferred to *panchayats*, i.e., *ad hoc* arbitration tribunals the personnel of which is usually determined by the parties to the case. Gandhiji has an intimate personal knowledge of the modern judicial system and its failings, having himself practised as a barrister in South Africa and

to add that mass-awakening and the adherence to non-violence on the part of the people filled him with some hope that Indian leaders would be courageous enough in the near future to say that they could do without any army. And even though armies may linger on he hoped that with due emphasis on non-violence they "may gradually be reduced to spectacular things, just as toys, remnants of something that is past and not as instruments of protection of the nation." *History of the Congress*, pp. 762-3.

1. *H.*, Oct. 23, 1937, p. 308, article on *Civil Liberties*.
2. *H.*, March 9, 1940, p. 31.
3. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 42.

India. He is a severe critic of the system and of lawyers and judges. The two are "first cousins" and much of what he says about lawyers also applies to judges. "The legal system teaches immorality. . . . The lawyers . . . as a rule, advance quarrels, instead of repressing them . . . their interest exist in multiplying disputes."¹ According to him, they are not entitled to more fees than labourers. As early as 1908 he discerned another great disservice of lawyers in India. "Those who know anything of the Hindu-Mohomedan quarrels know that they have been often due to the intervention of lawyers."² Their worst crime has been that they have tightened the grip of the foreign Government. "Without lawyers, courts could not have been established or conducted, and without the latter the English could not rule."²

As for courts he holds that it is wrong to consider that they are established for the benefit of the people. "Those who want to perpetuate their power do so through the courts. If people were to settle their own quarrels, a third party would not be able to exercise any authority over them."² The object of the courts is thus the permanence of the authority of the Government which they represent.³ Besides, "the decision of a third party is not always right. The parties alone know who is right. We, in our simplicity and ignorance, imagine that a stranger, by taking our money, gives us justice."⁴ In so far as they support the authority of an unrighteous Government the courts are not "the palladile of a nation's liberty," but "crushing houses to crush a nation's spirit."⁵

Much of Gandhiji's criticism applies to the judicial system in the modern State. Practically everywhere the proverbial delays and uncertainties make litigation a kind of gambling. Everywhere the measure of a lawyer's ability is his capacity to confuse the judge and twist the issue, i.e., to make the

1. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 42.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

3. *Y.I.*, I, p. 351. For similar views of H. J. Laski see his essay on *Judicial Function in The Dangers of Being a Gentleman*.

4. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 43.

5. *Y.I.*, I, p. 350.

“worse appear better reason” to the benefit of his client. Everywhere the judicial system favours the rich against the poor, the ruling classes against the masses. The system also tends to diminish respect for truth and tempts people to have recourses to perjury in order not to lose the case.

According to Gandhiji, “administration of justice should be cheapened. . . . Parties to civil suits must be compelled in the majority of cases to refer their disputes to arbitration, the decision of *panchayats* to be final except in cases of corruption or obvious misapplication of law. Multiplicity of intermediate courts should be avoided. Case law should be abolished and the general procedure should be simplified.”¹ Lawyers may remain, but must not claim any superiority for their profession. The true function of lawyers is to unite parties driven asunder.² Ideally lawyers must depend for their living on some form of bread-labour and serve people free. At any rate they must not charge exorbitant fees, and “the best legal talent must be available to the poorest at reasonable rates.”³

Thus Gandhiji would minimize the judicial work of the State. In the new State crimes and disturbances will diminish. People will ordinarily avoid courts and settle their differences by mutual compromise or private arbitration. In the few cases that come before the law courts of the State Justice will be cheap, speedy and efficient.

The non-violent State will try to equalise economic condition of the people with a view to secure social justice and economic freedom. To understand Gandhiji's views on this important function we may first briefly deal with the social and economic structure of the non-violent State.

The socio-economic structure of the Stateless society and the values in which it is rooted is the goal that the non-violent State will try to approach according to the moral capacity of its citizens. Before the non-violent State materialises,

1. *V.J.*, II, p. 436.

2. *Experiments*, I, p. 315.

3. *V.J.*, I, p. 352.

social equality must have been established, untouchability must have disappeared, caste rigidity loosened and economic life simplified and organised predominantly on the basis of handicrafts.

One important departure from the modified *varna* system of the classless society may be that in addition to enough bread labour for primary needs people may earn more by additional physical and intellectual labour. This partial observance of the law of bread labour may not be much of a difficulty in the non-violent State, for people will have taken to a life of simplicity. As they will have mastered the technique of non-violent resistance, over-possession will be possible only to the trustee. To quote Gandhiji, "in the nature of things, some will have ability to earn more and others less . . . such people (who earn more) exist as trustees. On no other terms I would allow a man of intellect to earn more. I would not cramp his intellect, but the bulk of greater earnings must be used for the good of the State." Gandhiji goes on to add that for bringing about trusteeship he would not depend merely on persuasion but would also employ non-violent non-co-operation, for "No person can amass wealth without the co-operation, willing or forced, of the people concerned."¹ Here again it is necessary to remember that "Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realizing a state of equality on earth than by any other method."²

Due to the partial realization of the ideals of bread-labour and trusteeship the non-violent State will be able to achieve only equitable distribution of wealth unlike the Stateless society which will be characterized by equal distribution or rather equality of non-possession. In other words, there will continue to be disparity between the economic resources of the people due to differences in their earning capacity. But

1. *V.I.*, Nov. 26, 1931.

2. *An interview with Mahatma Gandhi*, cited above.

the disparity will be kept within proper bounds ; for though people will continue to earn according to their capacity, the bulk of this earning will be used for the good of the community.

In the sphere of production the non-violent State will differ from the Stateless society in that the indispensable large scale production as well as heavy transport may continue. Though non-violence can be built up only on self-contained villages and small scale industries, to Gandhiji "The supreme consideration is man."¹ He does not believe in forcing the pace. Centralized production and heavy transport are a hindrance rather than a help to right living. But Gandhiji is conscious of the difficulty that people feel in giving up the modern means of communications as well as heavy machinery for the work of public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour. Thus he would permit the use of steam and electricity after people have "learnt to avoid industrialism."² By industrialism Gandhiji means centralized production and the profit motive. Even while permitting a certain minimum of centralized production he would take away its sting, i.e., the profit motive.

For the minimum centralized production he would permit private ownership of the means of production if the capitalist raises the worker to the status of co-proprietor of his wealth, and both labour and capital work as mutual trustees and trustees of consumers.³ But failing this he would accept State-ownership. These nationalized State-owned factories, he said in 1924, "ought only to be working under the most attractive and ideal conditions, not for profit, but for the benefit of humanity. . . . The saving of labour of the individual should be the object, and honest humanitarian consideration and not greed the motive."⁴ He has now accepted the principle that in State-owned enterprises the workers should be

1. *Y. I.*, II, p. 1029.

2. *Y. I.*, II, p. 1187.

3. *Y. I.*, III, p. 736.

4. *Y. I.*, II, p. 1130.

represented in the management through their elected representatives and should have an equal share in the management with the representatives of the Government. But so far as possible he would avoid centralized production and the use of big machinery because their dangers are incomparably greater than their benefits.¹ It should also be remembered that he is against large scale production of such elementary necessities as food and clothing. The means of producing these should remain in the control of the masses and "should be freely available as God's air and water are or ought to be."² Even in this sphere of production so long as villages aim at being self-contained and manufacture mainly for use, Gandhiji has no objection to "villages using even the modern machines and tools that they can make and afford to use. Only they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others."³ Similarly he is not against such modern technical facilities as can be used in decentralized cottage industries. Thus if electricity could be available in villages, he would not mind villagers plying their tools and implements with the help of electricity. "But then the village communities or the state would own power-houses just as they have their grazing pastures."⁴

In regard to the *zamindari* system Gandhiji would fall back upon legislative confiscation only if *zamindars* fail to work

1. "Mass-production through power-driven machinery", Gandhiji wrote in 1936, "even when state-owned, will be of no avail." (*H.* May 16, 1936, p. 111). His views regarding dangers of big machinery are shared by many Western thinkers. Stuart Chase sums up the case for and against machines and comes to the conclusion that "machinery has so far brought more misery than happiness into the world." See his *Men Machines*, Chs. XVIII and XIX. In his well-known book *Technics and Civilization* Lewis Mumford comes to the conclusion that maturity of social life will lead to the unemployment of machines and the replacement of old machines by "smaller, faster, brainer and more adaptable organisms, adapted not to the mine, the battlefield and the factory, but to the positive environment of life."
2. *Y. I.*, III, p. 924.
3. *H.*, Aug., 29, 1936, p. 226.
4. *H.*, June 22, 1935, p. 146. Some Western sociologists, for instance Lewis Mumford (*Technics and Civilization*) and Karl Mannheim (*Man and Society*), consider decentralization of industry by means of electrification as a useful antidote to the dangers of centralization, mechanization and dehumanization of large scale production.

as trustees of peasants and to remove the inequality between themselves and their peasants. Gandhiji also believes that "No man should have more land than he needs for his dignified sustenance."¹

In short, in regard to the means of production he prefers private ownership by individuals or voluntary organizations to State-ownership, provided private owners act as trustees either voluntarily or through persuasion by non-violent non-cooperation. This preference is due to the fear of the State using too much of violence. But if owners fail to act as trustees, he would support a minimum of State-ownership with or without confiscation as the case may demand. But the State should deprive the people of their property when unavoidable with the minimum exercise of violence.²

The socio-economic structure of the non-violent State brings out the importance of the role the State will play in economic life in order to ensure social justice and to equalize the economic condition of the people. The State will promote small scale industries. It will control forests, minerals, power resources and communications in the interests of the people. Landlords and capitalists may fail to live up to the ideal of trusteeship and voluntary efforts of the people may be unavailing. In such a case the State will end the various systems of landlordism and own and manage, jointly with the representatives of the workers, the unavoidable centralised production.³ For this purpose the the State may have to resort to confiscation with the minimum violence.

Though Gandhiji gives to the State the duty of equalizing economic condition even by confiscation, it seems to be a half-hearted concession. For he expresses his distrust of State action and his preference of trusteeship, and of ownership by small units like village communities. He even considers the violence of private ownership as less injurious than the violence of the State.⁴ In any case once the non-violent State

1. *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 97.

2. *An Interview with Mahatma Gandhi* cited above.

3. *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 97.

4. *H.* June 22, 1935, p. 146. *An Interview with Mahatma Gandhi* cited above.

is firmly established and necessary adjustments made in the socio-economic structure, economic life will become increasingly self-regulated and the need of State regulation will gradually diminish.

Gandhiji also advocates the revision of the revenue system so as to make the poor man's good the primary concern of the State. "All taxation to be healthy must return ten-fold to the tax-payer in the form of necessary services."¹ It must not fall like a dead weight on those who are least able to bear it. Nor must it make people pay for their own corruption, moral, mental and physical. The non-violent State will have nothing to do, unlike the modern democratic State, with the income derived from vices.² It will withdraw the protection of the law that gambling on the race course enjoys today and will forgo the income from this source. Similarly Gandhiji is against the State legalising brothels by issuing licences.² The proper method to deal with gambling houses and brothels is propaganda by the State as well as voluntary organisations for educating public opinion in the right direction so as to stop the vices.³

On the basis of these moral considerations the non-violent State will completely wipe out the revenue from drink and drug traffic. As a means of conserving the moral and material welfare of the country prohibition of intoxicants has been for twenty-five years one of the chief items of the constructive programme of Gandhiji. In 1937 when the Congress ministries came into office in the provinces Gandhiji expounded his plan of complete prohibition within three years.⁴ But in this as in other matters Gandhiji lays as much stress on voluntary effort as on State action. Imposing prohibition by law, i.e., closing down of drink and drug shops and thus

1. *H.*, July 31, 1937, p. 196.

2. *H.*, Sept. 4, 1937, p. 234.

3. *H.*, Sept. 4, 1937, pp. 234-35.

4. The Congress ministries in various provinces adopted the policy of enforcing prohibition within a period of years. But after their resignation much of their work in this direction has been undone during the undemocratic regime of the Governors.

removing the open temptation is merely the negative part of prohibition, the positive part being "a type of adult education of the nation", i.e., active systematic propaganda by voluntary organizations with the object of weaning the addicts. Propaganda also includes absolutely peaceful, silent and educative picketing and intimate personal contact with addicts.¹

There has been a good deal of criticism that complete prohibition may not be practicable, may give rise to illicit traffic and would, due to great loss of revenue, result in starving of education and other necessary social services. Gandhiji concedes that some illicit distillation may abide but so may thieving, and he would not on that account license either. To him man rather than money is the primary consideration. Rather than use the tainted money he would cut out the education budget, making education self-sufficing, effect other economics, tap other sources of revenue and even raise short-term loans.² Besides, economically also the nation will not be a loser. For the removal of this degrading tax enables the drinker, i.e., the tax-payer, to save his drink-bill and to earn and spend better which means a tremendous economic gain to the nation.³ Moreover, it is impossible to compute in terms of money the enormous moral, mental and physical advantages that will accrue from prohibition.

As regards taxes Gandhiji would prefer payment in labour to payment in coin. "Payment in labour invigorates the nation. Where people perform labour voluntarily for the service of society, exchange of money becomes unnecessary. The labour of collecting the taxes and keeping accounts is saved and the results are equally good."⁴ Payment in kind also implies the use of taxes for the benefit of the area from which they are gathered.

Another important duty of the State would be the education

1. *H.*, July 1, 1937, p. 196 and Oct. 9, 1937, p. 291.

2. *H.*, August 28, p. 229.

3. The annual drink-bill of India is estimated to be about Rs. 100 crores.

4. *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 65.

of the young. Gandhiji would make education free and compulsory during the primary stage from the age of 7 to 14. He has drawn up a new plan of self-supporting primary education. The plan has sprung out of non-violence, aims at rearing the younger generation on non-violent values and is an integral part of the non-violent democratic social order which Gandhiji has been trying to bring into being.

The central feature of the new plan is education of the child through a useful productive craft, the application of the ideal bread-labour to education. The medium of instruction should be the mother tongue and the education of all other subjects should be integrally related to the productive craft. A profit-yielding vocation should enable a pupil to pay for the tuition through the products of the labour, and at the same time, due to the purposive relationship between doing, learning and living, develop the whole man or woman in him or her.

Primary education extending over seven years would, according to Gandhiji, "equip boys and girls to earn their bread by the State guaranteeing employment in vocations learnt or by buying their manufactures at prices fixed by the State."¹

Though schools will thus be almost self-supporting, the children earning their tuition by what they produce, the State will have an important function to perform concerning education. It will compel guardians to put their wards to school. It will be responsible for supervision, co-ordination and guidance of schools. It will take over the manufactures of these schools and find market for them. "Land, buildings and equipment are not intended to be covered by the proceeds of the pupil's labour,"¹ and the State or local bodies will have to bear these expenses. The cost of education can be appreciably brought down by compulsory enlistment of the service of the youth for a year or longer before they begin their career. They may be paid a salary not exceeding their

1. *H.*, Oct. 30, 1937, p. 321.

maintenance on a scale in keeping with the economic level of the country.¹

The self-supporting aspect of Gandhiji's plan has been subjected to severe criticism. In his scheme, however, economic efficiency and educational efficiency coincide. If some schools fall short of the self-sufficiency standard, in the beginning many may, they will at least keep an eye on economic efficiency. That will add to the scanty resources of a poor country like India and is the only practical way to universalize education. But the self-sufficiency aspect of the question should not be forced beyond the point of educational efficiency.

A more serious objection to the plan is the large measure of socialization of industry that the scheme may involve, the State being required to market the produce of all persons at least upto the age of fourteen. But Gandhiji would in all likelihood decentralize the work and shift the responsibility to local bodies. Besides, it is also to be borne in mind that it is socialization tacked to handicrafts and not to centralized production.

The new plan should not clash with the interests of artisans. For one thing, education, instead of turning their children into drones, will enable them to eke out the scanty resources of the parents. It will also exalt the status of the artisan in society by recognizing labour as a moral force and build a bridge between theory and practice, industry and letters, artisan and student.

Politically the new education is of great significance "as the spearhead of a silent social revolution." In Gandhiji's words, "It will provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village and thus go a long way towards eradicating some of the worst evils of the present social insecurity and poisoned relationship between the classes. It will check the progressive decay of our villages and lay the foundation of a juster social order in which there is no unnatural division between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' and

everybody is assured of a living wage and the right of freedom. And all this would be accomplished without the horrors of a bloody class war or a colossal capital expenditure such as would be involved in the mechanization of a vast continent like India. Nor would it entail a helpless dependence on foreign imported machinery or technical skill. Lastly, by obviating the necessity for highly specialised talent, it would place the destiny of the masses, as it were, in their own hands."¹ In short, the new plan is an invaluable step towards a self-supporting, non-violent, democratic social order, free alike of exploitation and social or class hatreds.²

Gandhiji would also revolutionize college education, leaving it to private enterprise. He would throw the responsibility for maintaining engineering, vocational and commercial colleges on business and industrial concerns. Arts, agriculture and medical colleges will either be self-supporting or depend on voluntary contributions. The State universities would be purely examining bodies, self-supporting through the fees charged in examinations.³

Thus in regard to the functions of the State though Gandhiji stands for the 'least government' and the minimum use of coercion, he is no doctrinaire. He would support confiscation of property under certain conditions and favours compulsory service for universal education, compulsory education, com-

1. *H.*, Oct. 9, 1937, p. 293.
2. The experiment of basic education has been conducted for the last seven years. It has been introduced in Delhi, the United Provinces, Bihar, Orissa, Bengal, the Central Province, in three linguistic areas, Maharastra, Karnatak and Gujerat in the Bombay presidency and in the state of Kashmir. On the whole, wherever conducted properly the experiment has resulted in a healthy all-round development of the child both as an individual and as a useful member of the community. Many of the educational ideas contained in Gandhiji's scheme have been accepted by the Central Advisory Board of Education of the Government of India. See the Report of the Board, *Post-War Educational Development in India* ((4th Ed.), ch. I.
3. *H.*, July 31, 1937, p. 197-8 and Oct. 30, 1937 p. 321. Recently Gandhiji extended the scope of the Hindustani Talimi Sangh which had been confining itself to primary education. Now the object of the Sangh is "to work out a programme of national education for life through manual activity and handicrafts." The seventh annual meeting of the Sangh held in March, 1945, appointed committees to prepare the syllabus of pre-basic, post-basic and adult education.

pulsory prohibition and the nationalization of the essential centralized production. This compulsion is a sign of the inadequacy of non-violence as evolved by the people to deal with problems demanding immediate solution. Gandhiji provides ample safeguards against too much of compulsion or violence being used by the State. These are decentralization, importance of voluntary associations, the democratic structure of the State, and strong traditions of non-violent resistance.

The 'least government' of Gandhiji is not identical with the negative police functions. The non-violent State is not a mere *Polizeistaat*. The police and the military will be the least in evidence in the non-violent State. Besides, to advance the welfare of the people Gandhiji favours some functions of a socialistic or even communistic nature—functions in which State action is likely to be much more conducive to the welfare of the people than voluntary action. But if Gandhiji is not an individualist of the *laissez-faire* type, he is not a socialist or a communist either, for he believes in non-violent means, in a handicraft civilization, simplification of life and decentralization.

One important safeguard against the misuse of authority is the system of rights. With Gandhiji's approval the Karachi session of the Congress passed a resolution laying down fundamental rights. We give the resolution as the appendix to this chapter. But so far as Gandhiji is concerned the resolution was a compromise. Gandhiji does not believe in forcing the pace. His attainable middle ideal is always determined with reference to the people's capacity. Personally he would modify some of the rights in this resolution. To give a few instances, he favours labour franchise. As for the right to keep and bear arms, there is no place for their use in a non-violent social order, but people cannot be forced to be non-violent. So he holds that "it is the right of any Indian who wishes to bear arms to do so under lawful permission."¹ Until recently he was not against the *Swaraj* Government retaining the army and giving military training

to those who did not believe in *ahimsa*.¹ But now he is convinced that the non-violent State should have nothing to do with either army or military training. The Karachi resolution recognises the right of industrial workers and farmers to an economic minimum.² In connection with his scheme of education Gandhiji also imposes on the State the duty to respect the closely connected right of the individual, i.e., the right to work.³

Gandhiji, however, attaches far greater importance to duties than to rights. Rights are the opportunity for self-realization. The way to self-realization is the realization of one's spiritual unity with others by serving them and doing one's duty by them. Thus every right is the right to do one's duty. To quote Gandhiji ". . . the right to perform one's duties is the only right that is worth living for and dying for. It covers all legitimate rights."⁴ Further, if a right is demanded or recognised without the claimant possessing the capacity to perform the corresponding duty, the purpose of the right is not attained and the right cannot be sustained. Gandhiji relates his experience thus, "As a young man I began life by seeking to assert my rights, and I soon discovered I had none—not even over my wife. So I began discovering and performing my duty by my wife, my children, friends, companions and society, and I find today that I have greater rights, perhaps, than any living man I know. If this is too tall a claim, then I say I do not know any one who possesses greater rights than I".⁵ According to him in most of the democratic States the right to vote has proved a burden to the people because it has been acquired by the use of physical force or its threat and not by acquiring any fitness for it.⁶

If one acquires the capacity to perform a duty, the corresponding right must inevitably follow. The greatest duty is

1. *Speeches*, p. 394.

2. Sections 2 and 7 of the resolution.

3. *H.*, Oct. 30, 1937, p. 321.

4. *H.*, May 27, 1939, p. 143.

5. Gandhiji's reply to Mr. H. G. Well's cable on the Rights of Man
H., Oct. 13, 1940, p. 320.

6. *Hind Swaraj*, p. 61.

self-realization, i.e., cultivation of non-violent values or acquiring individual self-government. Thus according to Gandhiji, "we will become free only through self-suffering";¹ and "*Swaraj* of a people means the sum total of the *swaraj* (self-rule) of individuals."² "There is no duty but creates a corresponding right, and those only are true rights which flow from a due performance of one's duty. Hence rights of true citizenship accrue only to those who serve the State to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accrue to them."² In his address to the Kathiawar Political Conference (1925) he remarked, "The true source of right is duty . . . if we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they will escape us like a will o' the wisp. The more we pursue them the further they will fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words : 'Action alone is thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone.' Action is the duty ; fruit is the right."³

Gandhiji, as the above extracts bring out, uses the term 'right' not only with reference to the State, but in a wider sense, with reference to any and every aspect of social life. Once at least, it may be pointed out, he used the term in the sense of physical power. The relevant passage is : "Every one possesses the right to tell lies or resort to goondaism. But the exercise of such a right is harmful both to the exerciser and the society."⁴ Generally, however, he uses the term in the sense of freedom of action essential for the individual's self-realization.

Rights are created, according to him, not by the State or any other group, but by the individual himself as he develops fitness for the right by pursuit of truth and non-violence. The State and groups only recognize rights. This implies

1. *Hind Swaraj*, 94.

2. *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.

3. *Y.I.*, II, p. 479.

4. *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.

that the rights of different individuals may differ according to their moral capacities, i.e., the level of non-violence acquired by them.¹ Every right has not only the corresponding duty by performing which the right accrues but also a remedy for resisting an attack upon the right. That remedy is non-violent non-co-operation.²

The great advantage of his theory of rights is that it lays emphasis on social service rather than on the self-regarding propensities of the individual. As Gandhiji writes, "people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty, exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves."³ His theory also lays stress on self-help and teaches us to overcome the adverse circumstances and to blame ourselves and not others in case we do not possess rights. Further, people who have realized the importance of duties are not likely to abuse their rights and exploit others.

Though the non-violent State will be free and equal in status to other States, satyagrahi nationalism is not exclusive, aggressive or destructive. On the other hand it is constructive and humanitarian.⁴ One reason why it is constructive is that the means that it employs to fulfil itself is non-violence, the method of conversion and not of coercion. Besides, it stands for a country learning to live not by exploiting others but by serving others and dying for others. As such, non-violent nationalism is the essential pre-condition of sound internationalism. Thus Gandhiji wrote in 1925, "... it is impossible for one to be internationalist without being a nationalist. . . . It is not nationalism that is an evil, it is the narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness which is the bane

1. Cf. "The rights which different individuals may properly claim must vary according to their several ethical dispositions and capacities. Thus the man who by his striving has built up for himself an upright character has the right to demand from his fellow men a respect to which his less honest neighbour can make no proper claim." W. W. Willoughby, *The Ethical Basis of Political Authority*, pp. 246-7.
2. *Y. I.*, 26 March 1931.
3. *H.*, March 25, 1939, p. 64.
4. *Y. I.*, I, p. 673.

of modern nations which is evil. . . . Indian nationalism . . . wants to organise itself or to find full self-expression for the benefit and service of humanity at large."¹ Again, "We want freedom for our country but not at the expense or exploitation of others. . . . I want freedom of my country so that other countries may learn something from my free country, so that the resources of my country might be utilized for the benefit of mankind . . . a country has to be free in order that it may die, if necessary, for the benefit of the world. . . . My idea of nationalism is that my country may die so that the human race may live. There is no room for race-hatred there."²

Indeed, this fulfilment of nationalism through truth and non-violence will be in itself the greatest service of mankind. It will deliver the subject races from the crushing heels of imperialist powers. Says Gandhiji, "India's coming to her own will mean every nation doing likewise."³ In so far as subjection and exploitation are the greatest danger to world peace India's non-violent nationalism will be an invaluable contribution to the cause of peace.

Non-violent nationalism is a corollary of the doctrine of *Swadeshi* which lays down that one's countrymen are one's nearest neighbours and have the first claim upon one's service.⁴ Non-violent nationalism is thus essentially ethical and only incidentally political. It is a mere means and not an end, a means not only of securing the welfare of a people but also of serving humanity and advancing "the greatest good of all."

By national freedom Gandhiji does not mean absolute independence which is inconsistent with progressive internationalism. To quote him, "My notion of *Purna Swaraj* is not isolated independence but healthy and dignified interdependence."⁵ "The better mind of the world desires today

1. *Y. I.*, II, p. 1292.

2. Mahadeo Desai, *Gandhiji in Indian Villages*, p. 170.

3. *Y. I.*, III, p. 549 and his statement dated April 17, 1945.

4. See above, pp. 87-92.

5. *Y. I.*, March 26, 1931.

not absolutely independent States warring one against another but a federation of friendly interdependent States.”¹

According to Gandhiji the international organization should be freely established and non-violently maintained. In 1931 speaking at Geneva about the League of Nations he remarked, “It (the League) is expected to replace war, and by its own power, to arbitrate between nations who might have differences amongst themselves. But it has always seemed to me that the League lacks the necessary sanctions. . . . I venture to suggest to you that the means we have adopted in India supply the necessary sanction not only to a body like the League of Nations, but to any voluntary body or association that would take up this great cause of the peace of the world.”² A non-violent world organisation requires the giving up of armaments and of the use of force to defend even proved rights. “Proved rights should be capable of being vindicated by right means as against the rude, i.e., sanguinary means.”³ For controlling violent outbreaks between States he may welcome an international non-violent police force resembling peace-brigades or the police force of the non-violent State.

This world order rules out imperialism. “There will be an international League only when all the nations, big or small, composing it are fully independent. . . . In a society based on non-violence the smallest nation will feel as tall as the tallest.”⁴ Gandhiji thus stands for the establishment of

1. *Y. I.*, II, p. 438. Interdependence is, according to him, as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency, for man is a social being and his social interdependence enables him to realize his oneness with the universe and to suppress his egoism.
2. Quoted in B. Sharga, *Gandhi*, pp. 389-90.
3. *H.*, Oct. 14, 1939, p. 301. The Indian National Congress favours a world federal defence force to be employed by the world federation of free nations to maintain the world peace and prevent aggression and exploitation by one nation over another. (*Vide* the resolution of the A.I.C.C. dated August 8th, 1942). Gandhiji is, however against an “armed peace imposed upon the forcibly disarmed.” According to him the retention of an international police force is by no means an emblem of peace. Shedding of belief in war and violence is essential to the establishment of real peace based on freedom and equality of all races and nations. Gandhiji’s statement on the San Francisco Conference, April 17, 1945.
4. *H.*, Feb. 11, 1939, p. 8 and *H.*, Oct. 14, 1939, p. 301.

just political and economic international relations and the ending of the domination of one State over another.¹

The new world order will take time to evolve. Meanwhile there may be cases of international injustice and aggression. Aggression against a non-violent State will be unlikely and it will be easy for it to defend itself non-violently. The democratic socio-economic structure of the non-violent State being rooted in justice and equality, there will be no internal struggle for economic power which leads to imperialism or revolution.² Non-violence inside the State will also manifest itself in the foreign policy of the State. The non-violent Indian State, when it comes into existence, will endeavour "to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours, whether they be great powers or small nations, and shall covet no foreign territory."³ It will work for total disarmament and for the establishment of a non-violent international order. Its non-violence will command universal respect and arouse goodwill of the neighbours. For its defence it will rely on the goodwill of the whole world.⁴

Even if the non-violent State is a victim of aggression non-violent defence would be an easy affair. The satyagrahi method of resistance evolved by Gandhiji to win freedom will be applicable, with necessary modifications, against foreign

1. In 1940 Gandhiji endorsed a peace plan suggested by Dr Ram Manohar Lohia. The cardinal principles of the plan are:

(a) All peoples will be free. Those newly acquiring freedom will determine their constitution through a constituent assembly.

(b) All races are equal, and there will be no racial privileges in any part of the world. There will be no political bar to settling wherever one likes.

(c) All credits and investments owned by the Government and nationals of one country in another will be scrapped or submitted for impartial review to international tribunals. They will then be owned not by individuals but by the State.

(d) There will be total disarmament.

H., Aug. 25, 1940, p. 257; June 1, 1940, p. 151 and April 20, 1940, p. 96.

2. *H. J. Laski, Nationalism and the Future of Civilization*, p. 50.

3. *H.*, April 20, 1940, p. 96, *Jai Prakash's* picture.

4. *H.*, Feb. 10, 1940, p. 441.

aggression also. In the words of Gandhiji, "A non-violent man or society does not anticipate or provide for attacks from without. On the contrary, such a person or society firmly believes that nobody is going to disturb them. If the worst happens, there are two ways open to non-violence. To yield possession but non-co-operate with the aggressor. Thus supposing that a modern edition of Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the State will let him in but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people. They will prefer death to submission. The second way will be non-violent resistance by a people who have been trained in the non-violent way. They would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannon. The underlying belief in either case is that even a Nero is not devoid of a heart. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery."¹

According to Gandhiji there is no place in non-violent resistance for the technique of 'scorched earth' adopted to circumvent the enemy and hamper his march. As a war resister he sees neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property. "There is no bravery in my poisoning my well or filling it in so that my brother who is at war with me may not use the water. . . . Nor is there sacrifice in it, for it does not purify me, and sacrifice, as its root meaning implies, presupposes purity." Laws of war in olden times did not permit poisoning of wells and destroying of food crops. Whenever possible the non-violent resisters would stand between the crops and the aggressors so that the latter cannot help themselves to the crops so long as a single resister is living. Even if the resisters decide to retreat in an orderly manner in the hope of later resisting under other and better auspices, Gandhiji favours non-destruction of food-crops and the like. He sees reason, sacrifice and bravery in leaving property intact, if the non-violent resister does so not out of fear but because he refuses to regard anyone as his enemy—i.e., out of

1. *H.*, April 13, 1940, p. 90.

a humanitarian motive. Non-destruction involves bravery because the resister deliberately runs the risk of the enemy feeding himself at the former's expense and pursuing him, and sacrifice because the sentiment of leaving something for the enemy purifies and ennobles the resister.¹

The question has sometimes been posed to Gandhiji as to how satyagraha could avail against aerial warfare in which there are no personal contacts. The person who rains death from above has never any chance of even knowing whom and how many he has killed. Gandhiji's reply is that "behind the death-dealing bomb there is the human hand that releases it, and behind that still, is the human heart that sets the hand in motion. And at the back of the policy of terrorism is the assumption that terrorism if applied in a sufficient measure will produce the desired result, namely bend the adversary to the tyrant's will. But supposing a people make up their mind that they will never do the tyrant's will, nor retaliate with the tyrant's own methods, the tyrant will not find it worth his while to go on with his terrorism. If sufficient food is given to the tyrant, a time will come when he will have had more than surfeit."²

But if people are to die non-violently rather than submit to the aggressor, who will live, it may be asked, to enjoy freedom? According to Gandhiji, "The soldier who fights never expects to enjoy the fruits of victory (in violent combat). But in the case of non-violence, everybody seems to start with the assumption that the non-violent method must be set down as a failure unless he himself at least lives to enjoy the success thereof. This is both illogical and invidious. In satyagraha more than in armed warfare, it may be said that we find life by losing it."³

If the victim of aggression is a non-violent country reared on a civilization based on cottage industries, the country will

1. *H.*, March 22, 1942, p. 88 ; April 12, 1942, p. 109 ; April 19, 1942, pp. 121-22 ; and May 3, 1942, p. 140.
2. *H.*, Dec. 24, 1938, p. 394.
3. *H.*, July 28, 1940, p. 228.

lose much less and will far more effectively resist such aggression than if she is dependent on a factory civilization. The enemy will gain nothing out of destroying the cottage crafts and the devastated country will take little time to recover. Writes Gandhiji, "Even if Hitler was so minded, he could not devastate seven hundred thousand non-violent villages. He would himself become non-violent in the process."¹

It may perhaps be long before any State can mould itself according to the principle of non-violence. Gandhiji prescribes non-violent resistance even to the States which have so far depended on violence as the means of defence. But a State can use the non-violent technique only if it cleanses its hands of all ill-gotten gains, territorial or otherwise.

His prescription to the Abyssinians, the Czechs, the Poles, the English and other victims of aggression was to refuse to fight and yet to refuse to yield to the usurper. Thus concerning China he once remarked, "If the Chinese had non-violence of my conception, there would be no use left for the latest machinery of destruction which Japan possesses. The Chinese would say to Japan, 'Bring all your machinery, we present half of our population to you. But the remaining two hundred millions won't bend their knee to you.' If the Chinese did that, Japan would become China's slave."²

A non-violent neutral country should not allow an army to devastate a neighbouring country. It should refuse passage to the invading army by refusing all supplies. It should also present to the invader a living wall of men, women, and children and invite the invaders to walk over their corpses. The invading army, it may be said, would be brutal enough to walk over the non-violent resisters. But the latter shall have done their duty by allowing themselves to be annihilated. Besides, "An army that does pass over the corpses of innocent men and women would not be able to repeat the experiment."³

1. *H.*, Nov. 4, 39, p. 331.

2. *H.*, Dec. 24, 38, p. 394.

3. *Y. I.*, I. Dec. 31, 1931.

Gandhiji also favours the economic boycott of the aggressor nation by neutral States.¹

It is the duty of the neutral State to extend this moral sympathy and non-violent support to the victim of international aggression, even if the latter chooses to put up violent resistance. Gandhiji distinguishes between aggressive and defensive violence and wishes the latter success, though he also wishes that resistance should have been non-violent.² If a victim is capable of uttermost bravery and selflessness and fights violently an unequal battle against an aggressor incomparably superior in strength, Gandhiji would consider that violence almost as non-violence ; for when there is no premeditated violence and when there is no capacity for proportionate violence, violent resistance means "refusal to bend before overwhelming might in the full knowledge that it means certain death." The Polish resistance of 1939 is an instance of this kind.³

Undoubtedly if all the States could unitedly offer against the aggressor State moral resistance, war and aggression would be wiped out, but this can be possible only if the moral level of the average individual in the various States rises considerably. The victim of international aggression would welcome such moral support, but it should be prepared to rely on its own non-violent strength and to act alone.

1. In answer to a question by some Chinese visitors as to what the prospect of a boycott of Japanese goods by India were Gandhiji replied, "I wish I could say that there was any great hope. Our sympathies are with you, but they have not stirred us to our depths, or else we should have boycotted all Japanese goods especially Japanese cloth... Japan is not only conquering you but it is trying to conquer us too by its cheap flimsy machine-made goods . . . we too are a big nation like you. If we told the Japanese, we are not going to import a single yard of your calico nor export any of our cotton to you, Japan would think twice before proceeding with its aggression." Though in this passage Gandhiji has also in mind the economic aspect of *swadeshi*, he obviously stresses the economic boycott as a form of non-cooperation with the aggressor. *H.*, Jan. 28, 1930, p. 441.
2. *H.*, Dec. 9, 1939, p. 371 ; *Y. I.*, II, p. 423.
3. *H.*, Sept. 23, 1939, p. 281 and Sept. 8, 1940, p. 274.

War is cultural rather than a biological phenomenon¹ and never before was it so indiscriminate and universal in its destructiveness and so expensive as it is today. War also necessitates the establishment of dictatorship.² Besides being staggeringly destructive and expensive, war only deepens differences instead of settling them. In satyagraha, on the other hand, the loss in men will be much smaller than in war, with absolutely no expenditure in armament and fortifications. In earlier pages we have shown how the hardest heart must melt before the sufficiency of the heat of non-violence and how there is no limit to the capacity of non-violence to generate heat. The moral force created by

1. According to Marxists war is related to the economic competition between the classes in which the dominant class exploiting the others takes the initiative. H. C. Englebrecht (*Revolt Against War*) has collected psychological, anthropological and historical evidence to sustain the thesis that "man is not war." Quincy Wright (*A Study of War*) comes to the conclusion that war is in the main a sociological rather than a psychic phenomenon and that there is no specific war instinct but numerous motives and interests which lead to aggression by human populations. Mannheim similarly believes that the nature of social institutions and social regimes determines whether man in the mass has warlike or peaceful character and that human nature can very well do without war. See Quincy Wright, *A Study of War*, I, p. 277. II, pp. 1109-1200, 1367-68 and 1385-89; Mannheim, *Man and Society*, pp. 123-24. R. D. Gillespie refers to a certain Indian tribe on the western American sea-board to whom it is impossible to talk about warfare, "for they do not have even the conceptual basis to enable them to understand it." See his *Psychological Effects of War on Citizen and Soldier*, p. 219.
2. Wright discusses how in the most recent stage of world-civilization war has made for instability, disintegration, inadaptability and inflexibility of social and political structures and depotism, rendering the course of civilization less predictable and continued progress towards achievement of its values less probable. The results of war, he shows, are indeterminable and its costs excessive. War, which was professionalized during 1048-1789 and capitalized during 1789-1914, has become total war since 1914. H. W. Spiegel defines total war as armed conflict between sovereign States, sponsored and waged by a society in arms with the aim of destroying the vanquished nation. Total war is unrestricted in means, is fought with weapons supplied by modern technology, psychology and economics, and is characterized by mechanization, increased size of armies, intensification and nationalization of war effort, militarization and the breakdown of distinction between the armed forces and the civilians in military operations. The development of the modern military technique has tended towards the military totalitarian State. H. W. Spiegel, *The Economics of Total War*, p. 37.; P. Sorokin, *Contemporary Sociological Theories*, ch. VI; and Q. Wright, *A Study of War*, I, chapters IX, X and XII and pp. 129-31, 192, and 321.

genuine non-violent resistance of a State, though it may involve immense suffering, will produce incalculable moral effect and stagger the aggressor, the public opinion of the aggressor country will respond and the Government of that country will find it hard to carry their own people with them.

Gandhiji does not expect every citizen of a State, resorting to non-violent resistance for defence, to be a thorough-going *ahimsaist*, even as every citizen of a militarist country is not an expert in the military science. With a handful of experts and with a disciplined non-violent army that may bear the same proportion to the total population as does the violent army a country would be able to defy any aggressor.

Thus as the technique of defence against international aggression the need of non-violent resistance is most pressing and its efficacy seems to be certain.

The principles we have discussed in this chapter indicate the broad outline of the social frame-work which is likely to emerge from man's endeavour to reshape his life and environments according to the law of love. There is nothing final or fixed about these principles. In actual social adjustments these will be applied according to the urgencies of time and place in ways which cannot be foreseen today. Whether people will try to set up a non-violent State depends on whether they really desire liberty, peace and progress, i.e., genuine democracy. The establishment of peace and the fulfilment of democracy are synonymous with the cultivation of non-violence. Non-violence alone can reconcile national existence with international co-operation, even as it alone can harmonize individual liberty and social life.

The non-violent State will be a genuine democracy because it will be based on the largest possible measure of liberty and of equality of consideration. It will minimise exploitation and replace the master-servant and the capitalist-labour relationships by a new co-operative order based on rural civilization. Equality of political rights will possess a reality it lacks today, for it will be accompanied by decentralization

and social and approximate economic equality. Functions will be related to capacities and emphasis will be on service. Thus society will be simple enough to be within the grasp of the average man and yet rich in endless opportunity for a conscious life of freedom and individuality, service and constructive criticism.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER X

The resolution of the Karachi Congress on Fundamental Rights and Duties, as amended by the A.I.C.C. in August 1931 in Bombay :

1. (1) Every citizen of India has the right of free expression of opinion, the rights of free association and combination, and the right to assemble peacefully and without arms, for purposes not opposed to law or morality.
- (2) Every citizen shall enjoy freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise his religion, subject to public order and morality.
- (3) The culture, language and script of the minorities and of the different linguistic areas shall be protected.
- (4) All citizens are equal before the law, irrespective of caste, creed or sex.
- (5) No disability attaches to any citizen, by reason of his or her religion, caste, creed or sex, in regard to public employment, office or power or honour, and in the exercise of any trade or calling.
- (6) All citizens have equal rights and duties in regard to wells, tanks, roads, schools and places of public resort, maintained out of State or local funds, or dedicated by private persons for the use of the general public.

- (7) Every citizen has the right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations and reservations made in that behalf.
- (8) No person shall be deprived of his liberty nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered or confiscated, save in accordance with law.
- (9) The State shall observe neutrality in regard to all religions.
- (10) The franchise shall be on the basis of universal adult suffrage.
- (11) The State shall provide for free and compulsory primary education.
- (12) The State shall confer no titles.
- (13) There shall be no capital punishment.
- (14) Every citizen is free to move throughout India and to stay and settle in any part thereof, to acquire property and to follow any trade or calling and to be treated equally with regard to legal prosecution or protection in all parts of India.

Labour

- 2. (a) The organisation of economic life must conform to the principle of justice, to the end that it may secure a decent standard of living.
- (b) The State shall safeguard the interests of industrial workers and shall secure for them, by suitable legislation and in other ways, a living wage, healthy conditions of work, limited hours of labour, suitable machinery for the settlement of disputes between employers and workmen, and protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment.
- 3. Labour to be freed from serfdom and conditions bordering on serfdom.

4. Protection of women workers, and specially, adequate provision for leave during maternity period.
5. Children of school-going age shall not be employed in mines and factories.
6. Peasants and workers shall have the right to form unions to protect their interest.

Taxation and Expenditure

7. The system of land tenure and revenue and rent shall be reformed and an equitable adjustment made of the burden on agricultural land, immediately giving relief to the small peasantry by a substantial reduction of agricultural rent and revenue now paid by them, and in case of uneconomic holdings, exempting them from rent, so long as necessary, with such relief as may be just and necessary, to holders of small estates affected by such exemption or reduction in rent, and to the same end, imposing a graded tax on net income from land above a reasonable minimum.
8. Death duties on a graduated scale shall be levied on property above a fixed minimum.
9. There shall be a drastic reduction of military expenditure so as to bring it down to at least one-half of the present scale.
10. Expenditure and salaries in civil departments shall be largely reduced. No servant of the State, other than specially employed experts and the like, shall be paid above a certain fixed figure, which should not ordinarily exceed Rs. 500 per month.
11. No duty shall be levied on salt manufactured in India.

Economic and Social Programme

12. The State shall protect indigenous cloth ; and for this purpose pursue the policy of exclusion of foreign cloth

and foreign yarn from the country and adopt such other measures as may be found necessary. The State shall also protect other indigenous industries, where necessary, against foreign competition.

13. Intoxicating drinks and drugs shall be totally prohibited except for medicinal purposes.
14. Currency and exchange shall be regulated in the national interest.
15. The State shall own or control key industries and services, mineral resources, railways, waterways, shipping and other means of public transport.
16. Relief of agricultural indebtedness, and control of usury—direct or indirect.
17. The State shall provide for the military training of citizens so as to organise a means of national defence apart from the regular military forces.

CONCLUSION

The starting point of Gandhiji's philosophy is his faith in the reality of *Satya*. It is this Principle—and Gandhiji identifies it with God, Soul Force, Moral Law, etc.—which holds the universe. This self-acting Force manifests itself in the creation, giving it a basic unity.

The entire Gandhian philosophy is derived from the principle of spiritual unity. Man being rooted in *Satya*, his growth and self-expression require him to know it and to hold fast to it, i.e., to be a *satyagrāhi*. The greatest Truth being the unity of all life, self-expression consists in loving and serving all, i.e., in striving after "the greatest good of all". Loving service of all is non-violence. Thus *Satya* can be

pursued only by non-violent means. Spiritual unity cannot be realized by divisive means. As a corollary Gandhiji insists that to achieve the greatest good of all means must approximate to the end, and that there must be no dual code of ethics for individual and group conduct.

The greatest good of all can be realized when individual and social life expresses *Satya*. The satyagrahi can discern *Satya* intuitively. For Soul-force to develop and for intuition to be effective Gandhiji recommends a course of discipline. This discipline consists in self-control acquired by the pursuit of non-violent values. To realize the nature of *Satya*, i.e., Absolute *Satya*, the satyagrahi must hold by *satya* as he discerns it, i.e., relative *satya*. He must be non-violent, because violence offends against the greatest *Satya*, the unity and sacredness of all life. Violence is, therefore, *asatya*. Non-violence means the largest love, love even for the evil-doer. It seeks to conquer evil by truth, to resist physical force by soul-force, i.e., to convert the evil-doer by undertaking suffering. Gandhiji distinguishes between the non-violence of the brave embraced as a creed out of inner conviction and the non-violence of the weak adopted as a measure of expediency. The former alone is irresistible.

To cultivate the non-violence of the brave the satyagrahi must be humble and shed fear. For this he must achieve *brahmacharya*, i.e., control, in thought, word and deed, over all the senses. To be fearless the satyagrahi must have the right economic attitude which should be determined by the ideals of non-stealing, non-possession and bread-labour. Gandhiji believes that the satyagrahi grows spiritually as he simplifies life to share the lot of the poorest and the lowliest. He should cease to depend on money and other material means. These do not count for much in matters of spirit. A certain degree of comfort is no doubt essential for the satyagrahi but this should not go beyond the proper limit. *Swadeshi*, which stands for an all-sided creative patriotism, lays down the only correct way of advancing the greatest good of all. According to this principle the satyagrahi should restrict

himself to the use and service of his immediate surroundings in preference to the more remote.

This discipline necessary for the conscious cultivation of non-violence involves the control of our lower nature, specially the urges of sex, acquisitiveness, fear and pugnacity. It implies rational asceticism and not forced repression. We have discussed the rationale of these non-violent values in Chapters III, IV, and V. These conclusions of Gandhiji follow from his premises (i.e., belief in soul-force, the ultimate end and the need for non-violent means), and together with them form a single whole pattern. If the object is pursuit of *Satya* through non-violent means, Gandhiji wants us to effect a revaluation of current values and strive after a life of inner harmony.

The non-violent discipline is indispensable for the leaders among satyagrahis, if society is to progress. Discipline is expected of satyagrahi followers also but not the high level of moral excellence required of the leader.

The disciplined satyagrahi is an effective, self-confident leader. He depends on the voluntary obedience of his followers and honours public opinion and democracy in group affairs but in regard to his own attitude he is guided by the promptings of his own conscience. The leader aims at educating people in satyagraha so that society may evolve tendencies that will take from class and State their *raison d'être*. He organises the masses. The non-violent organisation seeks to be an ideal democracy in which decisions are taken by majority only in routine matters and the dissent of the minority receives the fullest consideration in matters affecting their specific interests. There is no room in such an organisation for power politics and manoeuvring for the capture of party machinery. When resisting wrongs the organisation becomes a non-violent army in which democratic methods are replaced by the unified control of the democratically chosen leader.

Satyagraha, being the relentless pursuit of truthful ends by non-violent means, includes, in addition to non-violent

direct action, all constructive activities. Nor is satyagraha merely a collective technique of direct action. Indeed, to be irresistible as a technique of direct action it has to be practised in every detail of daily life.

Satyagraha in its constructive as well as cleansing aspects is the instrument of social progress. Constructive satyagraha develops the moral strength of the people and disciplines them for the use of non-violent direct action. Besides, it is the technique of transforming the existing social order along non-violent lines even before political power and State machinery are captured by satyagrahis.

The satyagrahi leader employs every legitimate means of propaganda. To him propaganda does not mean exploiting public opinion, or acquiring over it an illegitimate control, but educating it by strictly truthful and non-violent methods. Such propaganda is, moreover, carried on not so much through the spoken and written word as through service and suffering. The constructive programme, which is "collective purificatory effort", is the best publicity for satyagraha.

As a form of direct action satyagraha is the technique of resisting injustice and settling conflicts. The satyagrahi aims at bringing about a change of heart in the opponent and awakening in him the sense of justice. If the satyagrahi's appeal to the opponent's reason fails, the former tries to melt the latter's heart by undertaking pure voluntary suffering. Gandhiji does not envisage the elimination of all conflicts, but aims at raising them from the destructive physical to the constructive moral plane where differences can be peacefully adjusted and antagonisms rather than antagonists liquidated.

As satyagraha integrates legitimate differences instead of suppressing them, it minimises the risk of counter-revolution and its gains are likely to be stable. Resistance, when non-violent, ceases to be negative and positively achieves, by the very exercise of soul-force, the approximation of the social order to the moral order. In satyagraha the building up of

a co-operative social order based on justice and non-violence and the destruction of the unjust system based on exploitation proceed together. According to Gandhiji, the major premise of non-violence being the belief that all men have infinite moral worth and should be treated as ends in themselves and not as mere means, non-violence alone is the democratic technique of freedom which can establish "self-rule in terms of the masses." There is nothing like defeat in satyagraha which thrives on repression and in which voluntary suffering is the instrument of success.

Gandhiji's social ideal is the classless and Stateless society, a state of self-regulated enlightened "anarchy", in which social cohesion will be maintained by internal and non-coercive external sanctions. But as this ideal is not realizable, he has an attainable middle ideal also—the predominantly non-violent State. Retaining the State in this second best society is a concession to human imperfection. Gandhiji distrusts the State because it is steeped in violence. He believes that for the State to be democratic citizens must acquire the capacity to resist non-violently any misuse of authority. The non-violent State will not be an end in itself but one of the means for the achievement of the greatest good of all. It will not be a sovereign State but a service State. The State will be a federation of decentralized democratic rural satyagrahi communities. These communities will be based on "voluntary simplicity, poverty and slowness," i.e., on a consciously slowed tempo of life in which emphasis will be on self-expression through the larger rhythms of life rather than quicker beats of the quest of power and pelf.

The non-violent State will perform limited functions using the minimum of coercion. Society in the non-violent State will be characterized by social and approximate economic equality. The economic life will be based on agriculture and cottage industries, though there will be a minimum of centralized production. The centralized production will be organized either on the basis of private enterprise, both labour and capital acting as mutual trustees and trustees of con-

sumers, or failing this, on the basis of State ownership and joint management by the State and the representatives of workers. An important feature of the economic life of the non-violent State will be the self-sufficiency of small regions except for essential produce which is not easily duplicable.

Gandhiji's plan of self-supporting education through productive handicrafts will establish an organic link between learning, doing and living and develop the whole of the child so as to make it a courageous, vigilant and active unit of the non-violent social order.

Decentralization of political and economic power, reduction in the functions and importance of the State, growth of voluntary associations, removal of dehumanizing poverty and superfluity, the new education and the tradition of non-violent resistance to injustice—all these will bring life within the grasp of man and make Society and the State democratic.

The non-violent State will co-operate with an international organisation based on non-violence. Peace will come not merely by changing the institutional forms but by regenerating those attitudes and ideals of which war, imperialism, capitalism and other forms of exploitation are the inevitable expressions.

The philosophy of satyagraha is the philosophy of the integral man. To Gandhiji the real being in man is the spirit. The spirit is one in all and the service of the community in every sphere of life is the one way to realize this truth. Gandhiji does not neglect the legitimate physical demands of man, but he believes that the lower in man must be harmonized with the higher. Satyagraha is thus the philosophy of harmonious life co-ordinated under the direction of soul-force. It unifies the spiritual and the temporal, the ideal and the practical, the individual and society. Gandhiji makes social philosophy and social life instinct with *Satya* and informs *Satya* with plenitude of living.

Thus Gandhiji's political theory is an organic part of his philosophy of life. The isolation of politics from moral principles in the name of science or realism is, to him, a trap to kill the soul. The method of non-violent resistance is a great contribution of his to the philosophy and technique of revolution. With greater thoroughness than any other thinker in the history of political thought he has explained how non-violence and democracy are integral parts of each other and how each can operate successfully only along with the other. His conception of democracy, in which every individual has acquired the capacity to resist non-violently misuse of authority, in which the dissent of the minority gets the maximum consideration and which is characterized by "the magnanimity of the majority", is in advance of the Western conception of democracy. In the absence of non-violence as the ruling principle of life, Gandhiji discounts the ethical pretensions of democracies in the West and regards them as an instrument of exploitation.

Similarly Gandhiji rejects the view of some of the Western economists that economics should be dissociated from ethical valuations. To him there is no sharp distinction between economics and ethics. His views on economic questions are an expression of his conviction that man's moral well-being must not be subordinated to the profit motive and money values and that economic activities like the rest of the human conduct should be so planned as to advance and not hurt moral welfare. Thus Gandhiji humanizes economics by subjecting it to the suzerainty of ethics.

But Gandhiji's philosophy, as he never wearies of reminding us, has no finality about it. He says he is searching for and experimenting with truth. The science of satyagraha is yet in the making. Even in regard to the fundamental aspects of his ideal he admits that logically there can be no absoluteness. All the same according to him there is a relative morality which is absolute enough for the imperfect mortals that we are.¹ His experiments now refer to the details of appli-

1. *H.*, Dec. 23, 1939, p. 387.

cation rather than to the basic concepts of the ideal, though some important problems arising from the application of non-violence still await solution. But if we take into account the long history of warfare, the half century during which Gandhiji has experimented with non-violence in group affairs appears too small a period for satyagraha to develop into a full-fledged science of peace.

As for originality Gandhiji's own judgment is : ". . . I represent no new truth. I endeavour to follow and represent Truth as I know it. I do claim to throw a new light on many an old Truth."¹ Again, "I have never claimed to be the one original satyagrahi. What I have claimed is the application of that doctrine on an almost universal scale."² Before his time the ideal of non-violence had come to be regarded a cloistered virtue. It lacked that fulness of meaning, the universality of application and the compelling appeal which Gandhiji has imparted to it. In demonstrating the applicability of non-violence to all situations of life, he has restated and reinterpreted the ideal. In his philosophy non-violence has grown and has been renovated. In so far as the survival and progress of mankind depend on non-violence, which is, according to him, the law of life, Gandhiji, who is the most authoritative exponent of non-violence in the contemporary world, has made an invaluable contribution to social and political thought.³

The philosophy of satyagraha is a great contribution to the cause of human welfare partly because Gandhiji is much more than a mere political thinker, statesman or academic philosopher. He is a seer, a creative moral genius whose one constant endeavour for more than 50 years has been the steady pursuit of moral discipline essential, according to the philosophical tradition of ancient India, for discerning *Satya*.

1. *Y. I.*, I, p. 567.

2. *Y. I.*, III, p. 367.

3. "I do not think," wrote the late Mr C. F. Andrews, "that there has been any more vital and inspiring contribution to ethical truth in our generation than Mr Gandhi's fearless logic in the practice of *Ahimsa*." *Speeches, Introduction*, p. 14.

His philosophy is based on what he considers to be the law of life and its growth, i.e., non-violence, the very soul of Truth, its maturest fruit. Gandhiji also feels that non-violence is his God-given mission. Thus, "I am confident that God has made me the instrument of showing the better way."¹ "God . . . has chosen me as His instrument for presenting non-violence to India. . . ."² Again, "My mission is to convert every Indian . . . and finally the world, to non-violence for regulating mutual relations whether political, economic, religious or social."³

At least on the grounds of expediency non-violence seems to be the price humanity must pay for its survival and growth. But will Gandhiji's message of satyagraha find acceptance on the part of the people in these dark and uncertain days when force and greed seem on the ascendant?

No doubt the science of satyagraha is not yet full-grown and those having vested interests or dazed by modern civilization, with its emphasis on wrong values, find it so difficult to comprehend its message. It is possible, therefore, that due to ignorance or selfishness mankind may fail to attain the necessary level of moral excellence. Perhaps, this insensate world, lost in its mad pursuit of wealth and power, may refuse to leave its selfish, sub-human ways. Satyagraha has then come in advance of its time. But man cannot break moral laws : in violating them he only breaks himself. Says Gandhiji, "no individual and no nation can violate the moral law with impunity."⁴ If non-violence is the only correct way mankind must either adopt it or perish.

Gandhiji is, however, not in the least pessimistic regarding the future of non-violence. Thus, "I can only say that my own experience in organising non-violent action for half a century fills me with hope for the future."⁵ "I feel in the

1. *H.*, Sep. 29, 1940, p. 302.

2. *H.*, July 23, 1938, p. 193.

3. *H.*, July 13, 1940, p. 410.

4. *Ethical Religion*, p. 48.

5. *H.*, Aug. 11, 1940, p. 241.

innermost recesses of my heart . . . that the world is sick unto death of blood-spilling. The world is seeking a way out, and I flatter myself with the belief that perhaps it will be the privilege of the ancient land of India to show that way out to the hungry world."¹

Satyagraha undoubtedly answers the deepest urge in men, the urge to be good and true, to love and to suffer. Besides, glaring inequalities, injustice, economic insecurity, hate, fear and violence, which are so chronic in the modern world, increase by sheer contrast the appeal of satyagraha. Even before the discovery of the atom-bomb the message and the movements of Gandhiji had made a deep impression on the people all the world over.²

Gandhiji feels that the future of non-violence depends on its coming to fruition in India. It is his unshakable belief that of all countries it is India's destiny, due to her unbroken tradition of non-violence, to deliver the message of satyagraha to mankind.

The future of non-violence in India depends on the sincerity of believers in non-violence—even though these genuine believers be, as they are likely to be, a small minority. To them Gandhiji's message is, "Let those who believe in non-violence as the only method of achieving real freedom, keep the lamp of non-violence burning bright in the midst of the present impenetrable gloom. The truth of a few will count, the untruth of millions will vanish even like chaff before a

1. Quoted in R. K. Prabhu and U. K. Rao, *The Mind of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 145.
2. R. B. Gregg wrote to Gandhiji in 1940, "Never before in all the history of the world have there been so many believers in non-violence, both in absolute number and also relatively to the rest of the population. Never before has that belief been found in all groups, classes, religions and occupations. Never before have so many prominent statesmen stated earnestly, clearly and publicly the folly, futility and appalling results of war and violence. Never before have so many military men been so unsure of the validity and ultimate effectiveness of their method." H., June 22, 1940, p. 169.

whiff of wind.”¹ The masses will be won over not by the mere ideal but by a group of persons. resolutely, courageously and selflessly living upto that ideal and realizing it in actual practice. This resolute minority will in its turn owe its inspiration to the leader. Thus Gandhiji once remarked, “If non-violence disappears after me, the inference should be that there was no non-violence in me.”² If Gandhiji’s inference is valid, and we feel it is, well may the distracted world hope that gradually, even if with occasional set-backs, the leaven of Gandhiji’s philosophy will work on. These set-backs, if they renovate the ideal, will be milestones on the path of fulfilment.

1. *Y. I.*, II, p. 1153.

2. Quoted by G. D. Birla in *Bapu* (Hindi), p. 36.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ethical Religion—M. K. Gandhi, *Ethical Religion*.

Experiments—M. K. Gandhi, *The Story of my Experiments with Truth* (Vol. I, 1927, Vol. II, 1929).

H—*Harijan*.

Hind Swaraj—M. K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (Natesan, Madras, 4th ed.)

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Satyagraha—*Satyagraha in Gandhiji's own words*, 1910-35.

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Yeravda Mandir—M. K. Gandhi, *Yeravda Mandir* (1933).

Y. I.—*Young India*.

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"	316	"	7	"	CHAPTER X	"	CHAPTER XI

